TALES

OF

A TRAVELLER.

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A TRAVELLER.

BY GEOFFREY CRAYON, GENT.

I am neither your minotaure, nor your centaure, nor your satyr, nor your hyæna, nor your babion, but your meer traveller, believe me.

BEN JONSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE READER.

WORTHY AND DEAR READER!

HAST thou ever been waylaid in the midst of a pleasant tour by some treacherous malady; thy heels tripped up, and thou left to count the tedious minutes as they passed, in the solitude of an inn chamber? If thou hast, thou wilt be able to pity me. Behold me, interrupted in the course of my journeying up the fair banks of the Rhine, and

laid up by indisposition in this old frontier town of Mentz. I have worn out every source of amusement. I know the sound of every clock that strikes, and bell that rings, in the place. I know to a second when to listen for the first tap of the Prussian drum, as it summons the garrison to parade; or at what hour to expect the distant sound of the Austrian military band. All these have grown wearisome to me, and even the well-known step of my doctor, as he slowly paces the corridor, with healing in the creak of his shoes, no longer affords an agreeable interruption to the monotony of my apartment.

For a time I attempted to beguile the

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weary hours by studying German under the tuition of mine host's pretty little daughter, Katrine; but I soon found even German had not power to charm a languid ear, and that the conjugating of *ich liebe* might be powerless, however rosy the lips which uttered it.

I tried to read, but my mind would not fix itself; I turned over volume after volume, but threw them by with distaste: "Well, then," said I at length in despair, "if I cannot read a book, I will write one." Never was there a more lucky idea; it at once gave me occupation and amusement.

The writing of a book was considered,

in old times, as an enterprise of toil and difficulty, insomuch that the most trifling lucubration was denominated a "work," and the world talked with awe and reverence of "the labours of the learned." These matters are better understood nowadays. Thanks to the improvements in all kind of manufactures, the art of book-making has been made familiar to the meanest capacity. Every body is an author. The scribbling of a quarto is the mere pastime of the idle; the young gentleman throws off his brace of duodecimos in the intervals of the sporting season, and the young lady produces her set of volumes with the same facility that her great grandmother worked a set of chair-bottoms.

The idea having struck me, therefore, to write a book, the reader will easily perceive that the execution of it was no difficult matter. I rummaged my portfolio, and cast about, in my recollection, for those floating materials which a man naturally collects in travelling; and here I have arranged them in this little work.

As I know this to be a story-telling and a story-reading age, and that the world is fond of being taught by apologue, I have digested the instruction I would convey into a number of tales. They may not possess the power of amusement which the tales told by many of my contemporaries possess; but then

I value myself on the sound moral which each of them contains. This may not be apparent at first, but the reader will be sure to find it out in the end. I am for curing the world by gentle alteratives, not by violent doses; indeed the patient should never be conscious that he is taking a dose. I have learnt this much from my experience under the hands of the worthy Hippocrates of Mentz.

I am not, therefore, for those barefaced tales which carry their moral on the surface, staring one in the face; they are enough to deter the squeamish reader. On the contrary, I have often hid my moral from sight, and disguised it

as much as possible by sweets and spices, so that while the simple reader is listening with open mouth to a ghost or a love story, he may have a bolus of sound morality popped down his throat, and be never the wiser for the fraud.

As the public is apt to be curious about the sources from whence an author draws his stories, doubtless that it may know how far to put faith in them, I would observe, that the Adventure of the German Student, or rather the latter part of it, is founded on an anecdote related to me as existing somewhere in French; and, indeed, I have been told, since writing it, that an ingenious tale has been founded on it by an English

writer; but I have never met with either the former or the latter in print. Some of the circumstances in the Adventure of the Mysterious Picture, and in the Story of the Young Italian, are vague recollections of anecdotes related to me some years since; but from what source derived I do not know. The Adventure of the Young Painter among the banditti is taken almost entirely from an authentic narrative in manuscript.

As to the other tales contained in this work, and, indeed, to my tales generally, I can make but one observation. I am an old traveller. I have read somewhat, heard and seen more, and dreamt more than all. My brain is

filled, therefore, with all kinds of odds and ends. In travelling, these heterogeneous matters have become shaken up in my mind, as the articles are apt to be in an ill-packed travelling-trunk; so that when I attempt to draw forth a fact, I cannot determine whether I have read, heard, or dreamt it; and I am always at a loss to know how much to believe of my own stories.

These matters being premised, fall to, worthy reader, with good appetite, and, above all, with good humour, to what is here set before thee. If the tales I have furnished should prove to be bad, they will at least be found short; so that no one will be wearied long on the same

theme. "Variety is charming," as some poet observes. There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse; as I have found in travelling in a stage coach, that it is often a comfort to shift one's position and be bruised in a new place.

Ever thine,

GEOFFREY CRAYON.

Dated from the HOTEL DE DARMSTADT,
ci-devant HOTEL DE PARIS,
MENTZ, *otherwise called* MAYENCE.

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PART I.

STRANGE STORIES.

BY

A NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.

I 'll tell you more, there was a fish taken,
A monstrous fish, with a sword by 's side, a long sword,
A pike in 's neck, and a gun in 's nose, a huge gun,
And letters of mart in 's mouth from the Duke of Florence.
Cleanthes. This is a monstrous lie.
Tony. I do confess it.
Do you think I'd tell you truths?

FLETCHER'S WIFE FOR A MONTH.

THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

THE following adventures were related to me by the same nervous gentleman who told me the romantic tale of the Stout Gentleman, published in Bracebridge Hall. It is very singular, that although I expressly stated that story to have been told to me, and described the very person who told it, still it has been received as an adventure that happened to myself. Now I protest I never met with any adventure of the kind. I should not have grieved at this, had it not been intimated by the author of Waverly, in an introduction to his novel of Peveril of the Peak, that he was himself the stout gentleman alluded to. I have ever since been importuned by questions and letters from gentlemen, and particularly from ladies without number, touching what I had seen of the Great Unknown.

Now all this is extremely tantalising. It is like being congratulated on the high prize when one has drawn a blank; for I have just as great a desire as any one of the public to penetrate the mystery of that very singular personage, whose voice fills every corner of the world, without any one being able to tell from whence it comes.

My friend the nervous gentleman, also, who is a man of very shy retired habits, complains that he has been excessively annoyed in consequence of its getting about in his neighbourhood that he is the fortunate personage. Insomuch, that he has become a character of considerable notoriety in two or three country towns, and has been repeatedly teased to exhibit himself at blue stocking parties, for no other reason than that of being "the gentleman who has had a glimpse of the author of Waverly."

Indeed the poor man has grown ten times as nervous as ever, since he has discovered, on such good authority, who the stout gentleman was; and will never forgive himself for not

having made a more resolute effort to get a full sight of him. He has anxiously endeavoured to call up a recollection of what he saw of that portly personage; and has ever since kept a curious eye on all gentlemen of more than ordinary dimensions, whom he has seen getting into stage coaches. All in vain! The features he had caught a glimpse of seem common to the whole race of stout gentlemen, and the Great Unknown remains as great an unknown as ever.

Having premised these circumstances, I will now let the nervous gentleman proceed with his stories.—

THE HUNTING DINNER.

I WAS once at a hunting dinner given by a worthy fox-hunting old Baronet, who kept bachelor's hall in jovial style, in an ancient rook-haunted family mansion, in one of the middle counties. He had been a devoted admirer of the fair sex in his young days; but, having travelled much, studied the sex in various countries with distinguished success, and returned home profoundly instructed, as he supposed, in the ways of woman, and a perfect master of the art of pleasing, he had the mortification of being jilted by a little boarding-school girl, who was scarcely versed in the accidence of love.

The Baronet was completely overcome by such an incredible defeat; retired from the world in disgust; put himself under the government of his housekeeper; and took to fox-hunting

like a perfect Nimrod. Whatever poets may say to the contrary, a man will grow out of love as he grows old; and a pack of fox-hounds may chase out of his heart even the memory of a boarding-school goddess. The Baronet was, when I saw him, as merry and mellow an old bachelor as ever followed a hound; and the love he had once felt for one woman had spread itself over the whole sex; so that there was not a pretty face in the whole country round but came in for a share.

The dinner was prolonged till a late hour; for our host having no ladies in his household to summon us to the drawing-room, the bottle maintained its true bachelor sway, unrivalled by its potent enemy the tea-kettle. The old hall in which we dined echoed to bursts of robustious fox-hunting merriment that made the ancient antlers shake on the walls. By degrees, however, the wine and the wassail of mine host began to operate upon bodies already a little jaded by the chase. The choice spirits which flashed up at the beginning of the dinner sparkled for a time, then gradually went out

one after another, or only emitted now and then a faint gleam from the socket. Some of the briskest talkers, who had given tongue so bravely at the first burst, fell fast asleep; and none kept on their way but certain of those long-winded prosers, who, like short-legged hounds, worry on unnoticed at the bottom of conversation, but are sure to be in at the death. Even these at length subsided into silence; and scarcely any thing was heard but the nasal communications of two or three veteran masticators, who having been silent while awake, were indemnifying the company in their sleep.

At length the announcement of tea and coffee in the cedar parlour roused all hands from this temporary torpor. Every one awoke marvellously renovated, and while sipping the refreshing beverage out of the Baronet's old-fashioned hereditary china, began to think of departing for their several homes. But here a sudden difficulty arose. While we had been prolonging our repast, a heavy winter storm had set in, with snow, rain, and sleet, driven by such bitter

blasts of wind, that they threatened to penetrate to the very bone.

"It's all in vain," said our hospitable host, "to think of putting one's head out of doors in such weather. So, gentlemen, I hold you my guests for this night at least, and will have your quarters prepared accordingly."

The unruly weather, which became more and more tempestuous, rendered the hospitable suggestion unanswerable. The only question was, whether such an unexpected accession of company to an already crowded house would not put the housekeeper to her trumps to accommodate them.

"Pshaw," cried mine host, "did you ever know of a bachelor's hall that was not elastic, and able to accommodate twice as many as it could hold?" So, out of a good-humoured pique, the housekeeper was summoned to a consultation before us all. The old lady appeared in her gala suit of faded brocade, which rustled with flurry and agitation; for in spite of our host's bravado, she

was a little perplexed. But in a bachelor's house, and with bachelor guests, these matters are readily managed. There is no lady of the house to stand upon squeamish points about lodging gentlemen in odd holes and corners, and exposing the shabby parts of the establishment. A bachelor's housekeeper is used to shifts and emergencies; so, after much worrying to and fro, and divers consultations about the red-room, and the blue-room, and the chintz-room, and the damask-room, and the little room with the bow window, the matter was finally arranged.

When all this was done, we were once more summoned to the standing rural amusement of eating. The time that had been consumed in dozing after dinner, and in the refreshment and consultation of the cedar parlour, was sufficient, in the opinion of the rosy-faced butler, to engender a reasonable appetite for supper. A slight repast had, therefore, been tricked up from the residue of dinner, consisting of a cold sirloin of beef, hashed venison, a devilled leg of

a turkey or so, and a few other of those light articles taken by country gentlemen to ensure sound sleep and heavy snoring.

The nap after dinner had brightened up every one's wit; and a great deal of excellent humour was expended upon the perplexities of mine host and his housekeeper, by certain married gentlemen of the company, who considered themselves privileged in joking with a bachelor's establishment. From this the banter turned as to what quarters each would find, on being thus suddenly billeted in so antiquated a mansion.

"By my soul," said an Irish captain of dragoons, one of the most merry and boisterous of the party, "by my soul but I should not be surprised if some of those good-looking gentlefolks that hang along the walls should walk about the rooms of this stormy night; or if I should find the ghost of one of those long-waisted ladies turning into my bed in mistake for her grave in the churchyard."

"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said a thin,

hatched-faced gentleman, with projecting eyes like a lobster.

I had remarked this last personage during dinner-time for one of those incessant questioners, who have a craving, unhealthy appetite in conversation. He never seemed satisfied with the whole of a story; never laughed when others laughed; but always put the joke to the question. He never could enjoy the kernel of the nut, but pestered himself to get more out of the shell.—"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Faith but I do," replied the jovial Irishman. "I was brought up in the fear and belief of them. We had a Benshee in our own family, honey."

"A Benshee, and what 's that?" cried the questioner.

"Why, an old lady ghost that tends upon your real Milesian families, and waits at their window to let them know when some of them are to die."

"A mighty pleasant piece of information!" cried an elderly gentleman with a knowing look, and with a flexible nose, to which he could give a whimsical twist when he wished to be waggish.

"By my soul, but I'd have you to know it's a piece of distinction to be waited on by a Benshee. It's a proof that one has pure blood in one's veins. But i'faith, now we are talking of ghosts, there never was a house or a night better fitted than the present for a ghost adventure. Pray, Sir John, haven't you such a thing as a haunted chamber to put a guest in?"

"Perhaps," said the Baronet, smiling, "I might accommodate you even on that point."

"Oh, I should like it of all things, my jewel. Some dark oaken room, with ugly, wo-begone portraits, that stare dismally at one; and about which the housekeeper has a power of delightful stories of love and murder. And then a dim lamp, a table with a rusty sword across it, and a spectre all in white, to draw aside one's curtains at midnight——"

"In truth," said an old gentleman at one end of the table, "you put me in mind of an anecdote—"

"Oh, a ghost story! a ghost story!" was vociferated round the board, every one edging his chair a little nearer.

The attention of the whole company was now turned upon the speaker. He was an old gentleman, one side of whose face was no match for the other. The eyelid drooped and hung down like an unhinged window-shutter. Indeed the whole side of his head was dilapidated, and seemed like the wing of a house shut up and haunted. I'll warrant that side was well stuffed with ghost stories.

There was an universal demand for the tale.

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "it's a mere anecdote, and a very commonplace one; but such as it is you shall have it. It is a story that I once heard my uncle tell as having happened to himself. He was a man very apt to meet with strange adventures. I have heard him tell of others much more singular."

"What kind of a man was your uncle?" said the questioning gentleman.

"Why, he was rather a dry, shrewd kind of body; a great traveller, and fond of telling his adventures."

"Pray, how old might he have been when that happened?"

"When what happened?" cried the gentleman with the flexible nose, impatiently. "Egad, you have not given any thing a chance to happen. Come, never mind our uncle's age; let us have his adventures."

The inquisitive gentleman being for the moment silenced, the old gentleman with the haunted head proceeded.—

THE ADVENTURE OF MY UNCLE.

Many years since, some time before the French revolution, my uncle had passed several months at Paris. The English and French were on better terms in those days than at present, and mingled cordially together in society. The English went abroad to spend money then, and the French were always ready to help them: they go abroad to save money at present, and that they can do without French assistance. Perhaps the travelling English were fewer and choicer then than at present, when the whole nation has broke loose and inundated the continent. At any rate, they circulated more readily and currently in foreign society, and my uncle,

during his residence in Paris, made many very intimate acquaintances among the French noblesse.

Some time afterwards, he was making a journey in the winter time in that part of Normandy called the Pays de Caux, when, as evening was closing in, he perceived the turrets of an ancient chateau rising out of the trees of its walled park; each turret, with its high conical roof of grey slate, like a candle with an extinguisher on it.

"To whom does that chateau belong, friend?" cried my uncle to a meagre but fiery postilion, who with tremendous jackboots and cocked hat was floundering on before him.

"To Monseigneur the Marquis de ——," said the postilion, touching his hat, partly out of respect to my uncle, and partly out of reverence to the noble name pronounced.

My uncle recollected the Marquis for a particular friend in Paris, who had often expressed a wish to see him at his paternal chateau. My uncle was an old traveller, one who knew how

to turn things to account. He revolved for a few moments in his mind how agreeable it would be to his friend the Marquis to be surprised in this sociable way by a pop visit; and how much more agreeable to himself to get into snug quarters in a chateau, and have a relish of the Marquis's well-known kitchen, and a smack of his superior Champagne and Burgundy, rather than put up with the miserable lodgement and miserable fare of a provincial inn. In a few minutes, therefore, the meagre postilion was cracking his whip like a very devil, or like a true Frenchman, up the long straight avenue that led to the chateau.

You have no doubt all seen French chateaus, as every body travels in France nowadays. This was one of the oldest; standing naked and alone in the midst of a desert of gravel walks and cold stone terraces; with a cold-looking formal garden, cut into angles and rhomboids; and a cold leafless park, divided geometrically by straight alleys; and two or three cold-looking noseless statues; and fountains spouting cold

water enough to make one's teeth chatter. At least such was the feeling they imparted on the wintry day of my uncle's visit; though, in hot summer weather, I'll warrant there was glare enough to scorch one's eyes out.

The smacking of the postilion's whip, which grew more and more intense the nearer they approached, frightened a flight of pigeons out of the dove-cote, and rooks out of the roofs, and finally a crew of servants out of the chateau, with the Marquis at their head. He was enchanted to see my uncle, for his chateau, like the house of our worthy host, had not many more guests at the time than it could accommodate. So he kissed my uncle on each cheek, after the French fashion, and ushered him into the castle.

The Marquis did the honours of his house with the urbanity of his country. In fact, he was proud of his old family chateau, for part of it was extremely old. There was a tower and chapel which had been built almost before the memory of man; but the rest was more modern,

the castle having been nearly demolished during the wars of the league. The Marquis dwelt upon this event with great satisfaction, and seemed really to entertain a grateful feeling towards Henry the Fourth, for having thought his paternal mansion worth battering down. He had many stories to tell of the prowess of his ancestors; and several skull-caps, helmets, and cross-bows, and divers huge boots, and buff jerkins, to show, which had been worn by the leaguers. Above all, there was a two-handled sword, which he could hardly wield, but which he displayed, as a proof that there had been giants in his family.

In truth, he was but a small descendant from such great warriors. When you looked at their bluff visages and brawny limbs, as depicted in their portraits, and then at the little Marquis, with his spindle shanks, and his sallow lantern visage, flanked with a pair of powdered ear-locks, or *aîles de pigeon*, that seemed ready to fly away with it, you could hardly believe him to be of the same race. But when you looked

at the eyes, that sparkled out like a beetle's from each side of his hooked nose, you saw at once that he inherited all the fiery spirit of his forefathers. In fact, a Frenchman's spirit never exhales, however his body may dwindle. It rather rarifies, and grows more inflammable, as the earthy particles diminish; and I have seen valour enough in a little fiery-hearted French dwarf to have furnished out a tolerable giant.

When once the Marquis, as he was wont, put on one of the old helmets that were stuck up in his hall, though his head no more filled it than a dry pea its peascod, yet his eyes flashed from the bottom of the iron cavern with the brilliancy of carbuncles; and when he poised the ponderous two-handled sword of his ancestors, you would have thought you saw the doughty little David wielding the sword of Goliah, which was unto him like a weaver's beam.

However, gentlemen, I am dwelling too long on this description of the Marquis and his chateau, but you must excuse me; he was an old friend of my uncle; and whenever my uncle told

the story, he was always fond of talking a great deal about his host.—Poor little Marquis! He was one of that handful of gallant courtiers who made such a devoted but hopeless stand in the cause of their sovereign, in the chateau of the Tuilleries, against the irruption of the mob, on the sad tenth of August. He displayed the valour of a preux French chevalier to the last; flourished feebly his little court sword with a ça-ça! in face of a whole legion of *sans culottes;* but was pinned to the wall like a butterfly, by the pike of a poissarde, and his heroic soul was borne up to heaven on his *aîles de pigeon.*

But all this has nothing to do with my story. To the point then—When the hour arrived for retiring for the night, my uncle was shown to his room, in a venerable old tower. It was the oldest part of the chateau, and had in ancient times been the donjon or strong hold; of course the chamber was none of the best. The Marquis had put him there, however, because he knew him to be a traveller of taste, and fond of antiquities; and also because the better apart-

ments were already occupied. Indeed, he perfectly reconciled my uncle to his quarters by mentioning the great personages who had once inhabited them, all of whom were, in some way or other, connected with the family. If you would take his word for it, John Baliol, or as he called him, Jean de Bailleul, had died of chagrin in this very chamber, on hearing of the success of his rival, Robert the Bruce, at the battle of Bannockburn. And when he added that the Duke de Guise had slept in it, my uncle was fain to felicitate himself on being honoured with such distinguished quarters.

The night was shrewd and windy, and the chamber none of the warmest. An old long-faced, long-bodied servant, in quaint livery, who attended upon my uncle, threw down an armfull of wood beside the fire-place, gave a queer look about the room, and then wished him *bon repos* with a grimace and a shrug that would have been suspicious from any other than an old French servant.

The chamber had indeed a wild crazy look, enough to strike any one who had read romances with apprehension and foreboding. The windows were high and narrow, and had once been loop-holes, but had been rudely enlarged, as well as the extreme thickness of the walls would permit; and the ill-fitted casements rattled to every breeze. You would have thought, on a windy night, some of the old leaguers were tramping and clanking about the apartment in their huge boots and rattling spurs. A door which stood ajar, and, like a true French door, would stand ajar in spite of every reason and effort to the contrary, opened upon a long dark corridor, that led the Lord knows whither, and seemed just made for ghosts to air themselves in, when they turned out of their graves at midnight. The wind would spring up into a hoarse murmur through this passage, and creak the door to and fro, as if some dubious ghost were balancing in its mind whether to come in or not. In a word, it was precisely the kind of

comfortless apartment that a ghost, if ghost there were in the chateau, would single out for its favourite lounge.

My uncle, however, though a man accustomed to meet with strange adventures, apprehended none at the time. He made several attempts to shut the door, but in vain. Not that he apprehended any thing, for he was too old a traveller to be daunted by a wild-looking apartment; but the night, as I have said, was cold and gusty, and the wind howled about the old turret pretty much as it does round this old mansion at this moment; and the breeze from the long dark corridor came in as damp and chilly as if from a dungeon. My uncle, therefore, since he could not close the door, threw a quantity of wood on the fire, which soon sent up a flame in the great wide-mouthed chimney that illumined the whole chamber, and made the shadow of the tongs on the opposite wall look like a long-legged giant. My uncle now clambered on the top of the half score of mattresses which form a French bed, and which stood in a deep recess; then tucking

himself snugly in, and burying himself up to the chin in the bed-clothes, he lay looking at the fire, and listening to the wind, and thinking how knowingly he had come over his friend the Marquis for a night's lodging—and so he fell asleep.

He had not taken above half of his first nap when he was awakened by the clock of the chateau, in the turret over his chamber, which struck midnight. It was just such an old clock as ghosts are fond of. It had a deep, dismal tone, and struck so slowly and tediously that my uncle thought it would never have done. He counted and counted till he was confident he counted thirteen, and then it stopped.

The fire had burnt low, and the blaze of the last faggot was almost expiring, burning in small blue flames, which now and then lengthened up into little white gleams. My uncle lay with his eyes half closed, and his night-cap drawn almost down to his nose. His fancy was already wandering, and began to mingle up the present scene with the crater of Vesuvius, the French

Opera, the Coliseum at Rome, Dolly's chop-house in London, and all the farrago of noted places with which the brain of a traveller is crammed :—in a word, he was just falling asleep.

Suddenly he was aroused by the sound of footsteps, that appeared to be slowly pacing along the corridor. My uncle, as I have often heard him say himself, was a man not easily frightened. So he lay quiet, supposing that this might be some other guest, or some servant on his way to bed. The footsteps, however, approached the door; the door gently opened; whether of its own accord, or whether pushed open, my uncle could not distinguish: a figure all in white glided in. It was a female, tall and stately in person, and of a most commanding air. Her dress was of an ancient fashion, ample in volume, and sweeping the floor. She walked up to the fire-place, without regarding my uncle, who raised his night-cap with one hand, and stared earnestly at her. She remained for some time standing by the fire, which flashing up at intervals, cast blue and white gleams of light,

that enabled my uncle to remark her appearance minutely.

Her face was ghastly pale, and perhaps rendered still more so by the bluish light of the fire. It possessed beauty, but its beauty was saddened by care and anxiety. There was the look of one accustomed to trouble, but of one whom trouble could not cast down or subdue; for there was still the predominating air of proud unconquerable resolution. Such at least was the opinion formed by my uncle, and he considered himself a great physiognomist.

The figure remained, as I said, for some time by the fire, putting out first one hand, then the other; then each foot alternately, as if warming itself; for your ghosts, if ghost it really was, are apt to be cold. My uncle, furthermore, remarked that it wore high-heeled shoes, after an ancient fashion, with paste or diamond buckles, that sparkled as though they were alive. At length the figure turned gently round, casting a glassy look about the apartment, which, as it passed over my uncle, made his blood run cold, and

chilled the very marrow in his bones. It then stretched its arms towards heaven, clasped its hands, and wringing them in a supplicating manner, glided slowly out of the room.

My uncle lay for some time meditating on this visitation, for (as he remarked when he told me the story) though a man of firmness, he was also a man of reflection, and did not reject a thing because it was out of the regular course of events. However, being, as I have before said, a great traveller, and accustomed to strange adventures, he drew his night-cap resolutely over his eyes, turned his back to the door, hoisted the bed-clothes high over his shoulders, and gradually fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not say, when he was awakened by the voice of some one at his bed-side. He turned round, and beheld the old French servant, with his ear-locks in tight buckles on each side of a long lantern face, on which habit had deeply wrinkled an everlasting smile. He made a thousand grimaces, and asked a thousand pardons for disturbing Monsieur,

but the morning was considerably advanced. While my uncle was dressing, he called vaguely to mind the visitor of the preceding night. He asked the ancient domestic what lady was in the habit of rambling about this part of the chateau at night. The old valet shrugged his shoulders as high as his head, laid one hand on his bosom, threw open the other with every finger extended, made a most whimsical grimace, which he meant to be complimentary:—

"It was not for him to know any thing of *les bonnes fortunes* of Monsieur."

My uncle saw there was nothing satisfactory to be learnt in this quarter.—After breakfast, he was walking with the Marquis through the modern apartments of the chateau, sliding over the well-waxed floors of silken saloons, amidst furniture rich in gilding and brocade, until they came to a long picture gallery, containing many portraits, some in oil and some in chalks.

Here was an ample field for the eloquence of his host, who had all the pride of a nobleman of the *ancien regime*. There was not a grand

name in Normandy, and hardly one in France, which was not, in some way or other, connected with his house. My uncle stood listening with inward impatience, resting sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, as the little Marquis descanted, with his usual fire and vivacity, on the achievements of his ancestors, whose portraits hung along the wall; from the martial deeds of the stern warriors in steel, to the gallantries and intrigues of the blue-eyed gentlemen, with fair smiling faces, powdered ear-locks, laced ruffles, and pink and blue silk coats and breeches;—not forgetting the conquests of the lovely shepherdesses, with hooped petticoats and waists no thicker than an hour-glass, who appeared ruling over their sheep and their swains, with dainty crooks decorated with fluttering ribands.

In the midst of his friend's discourse, my uncle was startled on beholding a full-length portrait, which seemed to him the very counterpart of his visitor of the preceding night.

"Methinks," said he, pointing to it, "I have seen the original of this portrait."

"Pardonnez moi," replied the Marquis politely, "that can hardly be, as the lady has been dead more than a hundred years. That was the beautiful Duchess de Longueville, who figured during the minority of Louis the Fourteenth."

"And was there any thing remarkable in her history?"

Never was question more unlucky. The little Marquis immediately threw himself into the attitude of a man about to tell a long story. In fact, my uncle had pulled upon himself the whole history of the civil war of the Fronde, in which the beautiful Duchess had played so distinguished a part. Turenne, Coligni, Mazarine, were called up from their graves to grace his narration; nor were the affairs of the Barricadoes, nor the chivalry of the Port Cocheres forgotten. My uncle began to wish himself a thousand leagues off from the Marquis and his merciless memory, when suddenly the little man's recollections took a more interesting turn. He was relating the imprisonment of the Duke de Longueville with the Princes Condé and Conti in

the chateau of Vincennes, and the ineffectual efforts of the Duchess to rouse the sturdy Normans to their rescue. He had come to that part where she was invested by the royal forces in the Castle of Dieppe.

"The spirit of the Duchess," proceeded the Marquis, "rose with her trials. It was astonishing to see so delicate and beautiful a being buffet so resolutely with hardships. She determined on a desperate means of escape. You may have seen the chateau in which she was mewed up; an old ragged wart of an edifice, standing on the knuckle of a hill, just above the rusty little town of Dieppe. One dark, unruly night she issued secretly out of a small postern gate of the castle, which the enemy had neglected to guard. The postern gate is there to this very day; opening upon a narrow bridge over a deep fosse between the castle and the brow of the hill. She was followed by her female attendants, a few domestics, and some gallant cavaliers, who still remained faithful to her fortunes. Her object was to gain a small

port about two leagues distant, where she had privately provided a vessel for her escape in case of emergency.

"The little band of fugitives were obliged to perform the distance on foot. When they arrived at the port the wind was high and stormy, the tide contrary, the vessel anchored far off in the road; and no means of getting on board but by a fishing shallop that lay tossing like a cockleshell on the edge of the surf. The Duchess determined to risk the attempt. The seamen endeavoured to dissuade her, but the imminence of her danger on shore, and the magnanimity of her spirit, urged her on. She had to be borne to the shallop in the arms of a mariner. Such was the violence of the winds and waves that he faltered, lost his foot-hold, and let his precious burthen fall into the sea.

"The Duchess was nearly drowned, but partly through her own struggles, partly by the exertions of the seamen, she got to land. As soon as she had a little recovered strength, she insisted on renewing the attempt. The storm,

however, had by this time become so violent as to set all efforts at defiance. To delay, was to be discovered and taken prisoner. As the only resource left, she procured horses; mounted with her female attendants, *en croupe*, behind the gallant gentlemen who accompanied her; and scoured the country to seek some temporary asylum.

"While the Duchess," continued the Marquis, laying his forefinger on my uncle's breast to arouse his flagging attention, "while the Duchess, poor lady, was wandering amid the tempest in this disconsolate manner, she arrived at this chateau. Her approach caused some uneasiness; for the clattering of a troop of horse at dead of night up the avenue of a lonely chateau, in those unsettled times, and in a troubled part of the country, was enough to occasion alarm.

"A tall, broad-shouldered chasseur, armed to the teeth, galloped a-head, and announced the name of the visitor. All uneasiness was

dispelled. The household turned out with flambeaux to receive her, and never did torches gleam on a more weather-beaten, travel-stained band than came tramping into the court. Such pale, careworn faces, such bedraggled dresses, as the poor Duchess and her females presented, each seated behind her cavalier: while the half-drenched, half-drowsy pages and attendants seemed ready to fall from their horses with sleep and fatigue.

"The Duchess was received with a hearty welcome by my ancestor. She was ushered into the hall of the chateau, and the fires soon crackled and blazed to cheer herself and her train; and every spit and stewpan was put in requisition to prepare ample refreshment for the wayfarers.

"She had a right to our hospitalities," continued the Marquis, drawing himself up with a slight degree of stateliness, "for she was related to our family. I'll tell you how it was. Her father, Henry de Bourbon, prince of Condé ——"

"But, did the Duchess pass the night in the

chateau?" said my uncle rather abruptly, terrified at the idea of getting involved in one of the Marquis's genealogical discussions.

"Oh, as to the Duchess, she was put into the very apartment you occupied last night, which at that time was a kind of state apartment. Her followers were quartered in the chambers opening upon the neighbouring corridor, and her favourite page slept in an adjoining closet. Up and down the corridor walked the great chasseur who had announced her arrival, and who acted as a kind of centinel or guard. He was a dark, stern, powerful looking fellow; and as the light of a lamp in the corridor fell upon his deeply-marked face and sinewy form, he seemed capable of defending the castle with his single arm.

"It was a rough, rude night; about this time of the year—apropos!—now I think of it, last night was the anniversary of her visit. I may well remember the precise date, for it was a night not to be forgotten by our house. There is a singular tradition concerning it in our fa-

mily." Here the Marquis hesitated, and a cloud seemed to gather about his bushy eyebrows. "There is a tradition—that a strange occurrence took place that night.—A strange, mysterious, inexplicable occurrence—" Here he checked himself, and paused.

"Did it relate to that lady?" inquired my uncle eagerly.

"It was past the hour of midnight," resumed the Marquis,—"when the whole chateau ——" Here he paused again. My uncle made a movement of anxious curiosity.

"Excuse me," said the Marquis, a slight blush streaking his sallow visage. "There are some circumstances connected with our family history which I do not like to relate. That was a rude period. A time of great crimes among great men: for you know high blood, when it runs wrong, will not run tamely like blood of the *canaille*—poor lady!—But I have a little family pride, that—excuse me—we will change the subject, if you please—"

My uncle's curiosity was piqued. The pomp-

ous and magnificent introduction had led him to expect something wonderful in the story to which it served as a kind of avenue. He had no idea of being cheated out of it by a sudden fit of unreasonable squeamishness. Besides, being a traveller in quest of information, he considered it his duty to inquire into every thing.

The Marquis, however, evaded every question. —" Well," said my uncle, a little petulantly, " whatever you may think of it, I saw that lady last night."

The Marquis stepped back and gazed at him with surprise.

" She paid me a visit in my bedchamber."

The Marquis pulled out his snuff-box with a shrug and a smile; taking this no doubt for an awkward piece of English pleasantry, which politeness required him to be charmed with.

My uncle went on gravely, however, and related the whole circumstance. The Marquis heard him through with profound attention,

holding his snuff-box unopened in his hand. When the story was finished, he tapped on the lid of his box deliberately, took a long, sonorous pinch of snuff——

"Bah!" said the Marquis, and walked towards the other end of the gallery.——

Here the narrator paused. The company waited for some time for him to resume his narration; but he continued silent.

"Well," said the inquisitive gentleman—"and what did your uncle say then?"

"Nothing," replied the other.

"And what did the Marquis say further?"

"Nothing."

"And is that all?"

"That is all," said the narrator, filling a glass of wine.

"I surmise," said the shrewd old gentleman with the waggish nose, "I surmise the ghost must have been the old housekeeper walking her rounds to see that all was right."

"Bah!" said the narrator. "My uncle was too much accustomed to strange sights not to know a ghost from a housekeeper!"

There was a murmur round the table half of merriment, half of disappointment. I was inclined to think the old gentleman had really an afterpart of his story in reserve; but he sipped his wine and said nothing more; and there was an odd expression about his dilapidated countenance that left me in doubt whether he were in drollery or earnest.

"Egad," said the knowing gentleman, with the flexible nose, "this story of your uncle puts me in mind of one that used to be told of an aunt of mine, by the mother's side; though I don't know that it will bear a comparison, as the good lady was not so prone to meet with strange adventures. But at any rate you shall have it."

THE ADVENTURE OF MY AUNT.

My aunt was a lady of large frame, strong mind, and great resolution: she was what might be termed a very manly woman. My uncle was a thin, puny, little man, very meek and acquiescent, and no match for my aunt. It was observed that he dwindled and dwindled gradually away, from the day of his marriage. His wife's powerful mind was too much for him; it wore him out. My aunt, however, took all possible care of him; had half the doctors in town to prescribe for him; made him take all their prescriptions, and dosed him with physic enough to cure a whole hospital. All was in vain. My uncle grew worse and worse the more dosing and nursing he underwent, until in the end

he added another to the long list of matrimonial victims who have been killed with kindness.

"And was it his ghost that appeared to her?" asked the inquisitive gentleman, who had questioned the former story-teller.

"You shall hear," replied the narrator. My aunt took on mightily for the death of her poor dear husband. Perhaps she felt some compunction at having given him so much physic, and nursed him into his grave. At any rate, she did all that a widow could do to honour his memory. She spared no expense in either the quantity or quality of her mourning weeds; she wore a miniature of him about her neck as large as a little sundial; and she had a full length portrait of him always hanging in her bed-chamber. All the world extolled her conduct to the skies; and it was determined that a woman who behaved so well to the memory of one husband deserved soon to get another.

It was not long after this that she went to take up her residence in an old country seat in Derbyshire, which had long been in the care of

merely a steward and housekeeper. She took most of her servants with her, intending to make it her principal abode. The house stood in a lonely, wild part of the country, among the gray Derbyshire hills, with a murderer hanging in chains on a bleak height in full view.

The servants from town were half frightened out of their wits at the idea of living in such a dismal, pagan-looking place; especially when they got together in the servants' hall in the evening, and compared notes on all the hobgoblin stories they had picked up in the course of the day. They were afraid to venture alone about the gloomy, black-looking chambers. My lady's maid, who was troubled with nerves, declared she could never sleep alone in such a "gashly rummaging old building;" and the footman, who was a kind-hearted young fellow, did all in his power to cheer her up.

My aunt herself seemed to be struck with the lonely appearance of the house. Before she went to bed, therefore, she examined well the fastnesses of the doors and windows; locked

up the plate with her own hands, and carried the keys, together with a little box of money and jewels, to her own room; for she was a notable woman, and always saw to all things herself. Having put the keys under her pillow, and dismissed her maid, she sat by her toilet arranging her hair; for being, in spite of her grief for my uncle, rather a buxom widow, she was somewhat particular about her person. She sat for a little while looking at her face in the glass, first on one side, then on the other, as ladies are apt to do when they would ascertain whether they have been in good looks; for a roystering country squire of the neighbourhood, with whom she had flirted when a girl, had called that day to welcome her to the country.

All of a sudden she thought she heard something move behind her.—She looked hastily round, but there was nothing to be seen.—Nothing but the grimly painted portrait of her poor dear man, which had been hung against the wall.

She gave a heavy sigh to his memory, as she

was accustomed to do whenever she spoke of him in company, and then went on adjusting her night dress, and thinking of the squire. Her sigh was re-echoed, or answered by a long drawn breath. She looked round again, but no one was to be seen. She ascribed these sounds to the wind oozing through the rat-holes of the old mansion, and proceeded leisurely to put her hair in papers, when, all at once, she thought she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move.

"The back of her head being toward it!" said the story-teller with the ruined head, "good!"

"Yes, sir!" replied drily the narrator, "her back being toward the portrait, but her eyes fixed on its reflection in the glass." Well, as I was saying, she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move. So strange a circumstance, as you may well suppose, gave her a sudden shock. To assure herself of the fact, she put one hand to her forehead as if rubbing it; peeped through her fingers, and moved the candle with the other hand. The light of the taper gleamed on the

eye, and was reflected from it. She was sure it moved. Nay more, it seemed to give her a wink, as she had sometimes known her husband to do when living! It struck a momentary chill to her heart; for she was a lone woman, and felt herself fearfully situated.

The chill was but transient. My aunt, who was almost as resolute a personage as your uncle, sir, [turning to the old story-teller,] became instantly calm and collected. She went on adjusting her dress. She even hummed an air, and did not make a single false note. She casually overturned a dressing-box; took a candle and picked up the articles one by one from the floor; pursued a rolling pincushion that was making the best of its way under the bed; then opened the door; looked for an instant into the corridor, as if in doubt whether to go; and then walked quietly out.

She hastened down stairs, ordered the servants to arm themselves with the weapons that first came to hand, placed herself at their head, and returned almost immediately.

Her hastily levied army presented a formidable force. The steward had a rusty blunderbuss, the coachman a loaded whip, the footman a pair of horse pistols, the cook a huge chopping knife, and the butler a bottle in each hand. My aunt led the van with a red-hot poker, and, in my opinion, she was the most formidable of the party. The waiting-maid, who dreaded to stay alone in the servants' hall, brought up the rear, smelling to a broken bottle of volatile salts, and expressing her terror of the ghosteses.

"Ghosts!" said my aunt resolutely. "I'll singe their whiskers for them!"

They entered the chamber. All was still and undisturbed as when she had left it. They approached the portrait of my uncle.

"Pull me down that picture!" cried my aunt. A heavy groan, and a sound like the chattering of teeth, issued from the portrait. The servants shrunk back; the maid uttered a faint shriek, and clung to the footman for support.

"Instantly!" added my aunt, with a stamp of the foot.

The picture was pulled down, and from a recess behind it, in which had formerly stood a clock, they hauled forth a round-shouldered, black-bearded varlet, with a knife as long as my arm, but trembling all over like an aspen-leaf.

"Well, and who was he? No ghost, I suppose," said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A Knight of the Post," replied the narrator, "who had been smitten with the worth of the wealthy widow; or rather a marauding Tarquin, who had stolen into her chamber to violate her purse, and rifle her strong box, when all the house should be asleep. In plain terms," continued he, "the vagabond was a loose idle fellow of the neighbourhood, who had once been a servant in the house, and had been employed to assist in arranging it for the reception of its mistress. He confessed that he had contrived this hiding-place for his nefarious purposes, and had borrowed an eye from the portrait by way of a reconnoitring hole."

"And what did they do with him?—did they hang him?" resumed the questioner.

"Hang him!—how could they?" exclaimed a beetle-browed Barrister, with a hawk's nose. "The offence was not capital. No robbery, no assault had been committed. No forcible entry or breaking into the premises.—"

"My aunt," said the narrator, "was a woman of spirit, and apt to take the law in her own hands. She had her own notions of cleanliness also. She ordered the fellow to be drawn through the horsepond, to cleanse away all offences, and then to be well rubbed down with an oaken towel."

"And what became of him afterwards?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"I do not exactly know. I believe he was sent on a voyage of improvement to Botany Bay."

"And your aunt," said the inquisitive gentleman; "I'll warrant she took care to make her maid sleep in the room with her after that."

"No, sir, she did better; she gave her hand

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shortly after to the roystering squire; for she used to observe, that it was a dismal thing for a woman to sleep alone in the country."

"She was right," observed the inquisitive gentleman, nodding sagaciously; "but I am sorry they did not hang that fellow."

It was agreed on all hands that the last narrator had brought his tale to the most satisfactory conclusion, though a country clergyman present regretted that the uncle and aunt, who figured in the different stories, had not been married together: they certainly would have been well matched.

"But I don't see, after all," said the inquisitive gentleman, "that there was any ghost in this last story."

"Oh! If it's ghosts you want, honey," cried the Irish Captain of Dragoons, "if it's ghosts you want, you shall have a whole regiment of them. And since these gentlemen have given the adventures of their uncles and aunts, faith and I'll even give you a chapter out of my own family history."

THE BOLD DRAGOON;

OR THE

ADVENTURE OF MY GRANDFATHER.

My grandfather was a bold Dragoon, for its a profession, d'ye see, that has run in the family. All my forefathers have been Dragoons, and died on the field of honour, except myself, and I hope my posterity may be able to say the same; however, I don't mean to be vain-glorious.—Well, my grandfather, as I said, was a bold Dragoon, and had served in the Low Countries. In fact, he was one of that very army, which, according to my uncle Toby, swore so terribly in Flanders. He could swear a good stick himself; and moreover was the very man that introduced the doctrine Corporal Trim mentions of radical heat and radical moisture; or, in other words, the mode of keeping out the damps

of ditch-water by burnt brandy. Be that as it may, it 's nothing to the purport of my story. I only tell it to show you that my grandfather was a man not easily to be humbugged. He had seen service, or, according to his own phrase, he had seen the devil—and that 's saying every thing.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was on his way to England, for which he intended to embark from Ostend—bad luck to the place!—for one where I was kept by storms and head winds for three long days, and the devil of a jolly companion or pretty face to comfort me. Well, as I was saying, my grandfather was on his way to England, or rather to Ostend—no matter which, it 's all the same. So one evening, towards nightfall, he rode jollily into Bruges.—Very like you all know Bruges, gentlemen; a queer old-fashioned Flemish town, once, they say, a great place for trade and money-making in old times, when the Mynheers were in their glory; but almost as large and as empty as an Irishman's pocket at the present day.—Well, gentlemen, it was at the

time of the annual fair. All Bruges was crowded; and the canals swarmed with Dutch boats, and the streets swarmed with Dutch merchants; and there was hardly any getting along for goods, wares, and merchandizes, and peasants in big breeches, and women in half a score of petticoats.

My grandfather rode jollily along, in his easy slashing way, for he was a saucy sun-shiny fellow—staring about him at the motley crowd, and the old houses with gable ends to the street, and storks' nests on the chimneys; winking at the yafrows who showed their faces at the windows, and joking the women right and left in the street; all of whom laughed, and took it in amazing good part; for though he did not know a word of the language, yet he had always a knack of making himself understood among the women.

Well, gentlemen, it being the time of the annual fair, all the town was crowded, every inn and tavern full, and my grandfather applied in

vain from one to the other for admittance. At length he rode up to an old rackety inn that looked ready to fall to pieces, and which all the rats would have run away from, if they could have found room in any other house to put their heads. It was just such a queer building as you see in Dutch pictures, with a tall roof that reached up into the clouds, and as many garrets one over the other, as the seven heavens of Mahomet. Nothing had saved it from tumbling down but a stork's nest on the chimney, which always brings good luck to a house in the Low Countries; and at the very time of my grandfather's arrival there were two of these long-legged birds of grace standing like ghosts on the chimney top. Faith, but they 've kept the house on its legs to this very day, for you may see it any time you pass through Bruges, as it stands there yet, only it is turned into a brewery of strong Flemish beer,—at least it was so when I came that way after the battle of Waterloo.

My grandfather eyed the house curiously as he

approached. It might not have altogether struck his fancy, had he not seen in large letters over the door,

HEER VERKOOPT MAN GOEDEN DRANK.

My grandfather had learnt enough of the language to know that the sign promised good liquor. "This is the house for me," said he, stopping short before the door.

The sudden appearance of a dashing dragoon was an event in an old inn, frequented only by the peaceful sons of traffic. A rich burgher of Antwerp, a stately ample man in a broad Flemish hat, and who was the great man, and great patron of the establishment, sat smoking a clean long pipe on one side of the door; a fat little distiller of Geneva, from Schiedam, sat smoking on the other; and the bottle-nosed host stood in the door, and the comely hostess, in crimped cap, beside him; and the hostess's daughter, a plump Flanders lass, with long gold pendants in her ears, was at a side window.

"Humph!" said the rich burgher of Antwerp, with a sulky glance at the stranger.

"Der duyvel!" said the fat little distiller of Schiedam.

The landlord saw, with the quick glance of a publican, that the new guest was not at all, at all to the taste of the old ones; and, to tell the truth, he did not himself like my grandfather's saucy eye. He shook his head. "Not a garret in the house but was full."

"Not a garret!" echoed the landlady.

"Not a garret!" echoed the daughter.

The burgher of Antwerp, and the little distiller of Schiedam, continued to smoke their pipes sullenly, eying the enemy askance from under their broad hats, but said nothing.

My grandfather was not a man to be browbeaten. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, cocked his head on one side, stuck one arm akimbo, "Faith and troth!" said he, "but I'll sleep in this house this very night."—As he said this he gave a slap on his thigh, by way of emphasis—the slap went to the landlady's heart.

He followed up the vow by jumping off his horse, and making his way past the staring Mynheers into the public room.—May be you 've been in the bar-room of an old Flemish inn—faith, but a handsome chamber it was as you 'd wish to see; with a brick floor, and a great fire-place, with the whole Bible history in glazed tiles; and then the mantel-piece, pitching itself head foremost out of the wall, with a whole regiment of cracked teapots and earthen jugs paraded on it; not to mention half a dozen great Delft platters, hung about the room by way of pictures; and the little bar in one corner, and the bouncing barmaid inside of it, with a red calico cap and yellow ear-drops.

My grandfather snapped his fingers over his head, as he cast an eye round the room—"Faith this is the very house I 've been looking after," said he.

There was some further show of resistance on the part of the garrison; but my grandfather was an old soldier, and an Irishman to boot, and not easily repulsed, especially after he had got into

the fortress. So he blarneyed the landlord, kissed the landlord's wife, tickled the landlord's daughter, chucked the bar-maid under the chin; and it was agreed on all hands that it would be a thousand pities, and a burning shame into the bargain, to turn such a bold dragoon into the streets. So they laid their heads together, that is to say, my grandfather and the landlady, and it was at length agreed to accommodate him with an old chamber that had been for some time shut up.

"Some say it's haunted," whispered the landlord's daughter; "but you are a bold dragoon, and I dare say don't fear ghosts."

"The divil a bit!" said my grandfather, pinching her plump cheek. "But if I should be troubled by ghosts, I've been to the Red Sea in my time, and have a pleasant way of laying them, my darling."

And then he whispered something to the girl which made her laugh, and give him a good-humoured box on the ear. In short, there was nobody knew better how to make his way among the petticoats than my grandfather.

In a little while, as was his usual way, he took complete possession of the house, swaggering all over it; into the stable to look after his horse, into the kitchen to look after his supper. He had something to say or do with every one; smoked with the Dutchmen, drank with the Germans, slapped the landlord on the shoulder, romped with his daughter and the bar-maid:—never since the days of Alley Croaker had such a rattling blade been seen. The landlord stared at him with astonishment; the landlord's daughter hung her head and giggled whenever he came near; and as he swaggered along the corridor, with his sword trailing by his side, the maids looked after him, and whispered to one another, "What a proper man!"

At supper, my grandfather took command of the table-d'hôte as though he had been at home; helped every body, not forgetting himself; talked with every one, whether he understood their language or not; and made his way into the intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any

one during his life. In fact, he revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse that the very house reeled with it. He outsat every one at table excepting the little fat distiller of Schiedam, who sat soaking a long time before he broke forth; but when he did, he was a very devil incarnate. He took a violent affection for my grandfather; so they sat drinking and smoking, and telling stories, and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hiccuping, and trolling the burthen of a low Dutch love song.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was shown to his quarters up a large staircase, composed of loads of hewn timber; and through long rigmarole passages, hung with blackened paintings of fish, and fruit, and game, and country frolics, and huge kitchens, and portly Burgomasters, such as you see about old-fashioned Flemish inns, till at length he arrived at his room.

An old-times chamber it was, sure enough, and crowded with all kinds of trumpery. It looked like an infirmary for decayed and superannuated furniture, where every thing diseased or disabled was sent to nurse or to be forgotten. Or rather it might be taken for a general congress of old legitimate moveables, where every kind and country had a representative. No two chairs were alike. Such high backs and low backs, and leather bottoms, and worsted bottoms, and straw bottoms, and no bottoms; and cracked marble tables with curiously-carved legs, holding balls in their claws, as though they were going to play at nine-pins.

My grandfather made a bow to the motley assemblage as he entered, and, having undressed himself, placed his light in the fire-place, asking pardon of the tongs, which seemed to be making love to the shovel in the chimney corner, and whispering soft nonsense in its ear.

The rest of the guests were by this time sound asleep, for your Mynheers are huge sleepers. The house-maids, one by one, crept up yawn-

ing to their attics, and not a female head in the inn was laid on a pillow that night without dreaming of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him. So, sure enough, in a little time it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in a fever heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers; who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bullfrogs in a swamp. The quieter the house became, the more unquiet became my grandfather. He waxed warmer and warmer, until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

"May be the maid had warmed it too much?" said the curious gentleman, inquiringly.

"I rather think the contrary," replied the Irishman.—"But, be that as it may, it grew too hot for my grandfather."

"Faith, there's no standing this any longer," says he. So he jumped out of bed, and went strolling about the house.

"What for?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Why to cool himself, to be sure—or perhaps to find a more comfortable bed—or perhaps—But no matter what he went for—he never mentioned—and there's no use in taking up our time in conjecturing."

Well, my grandfather had been for some time absent from his room, and was returning, perfectly cool, when just as he reached the door he heard a strange noise within. He paused and listened. It seemed as if some one were trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma. He recollected the report of the room being haunted; but he was no believer in ghosts, so he pushed the door gently open and peeped in.

Egad, gentlemen, there was a gambol carrying on within enough to have astonished St. Anthony himself. By the light of the fire he saw a pale, weazen-faced fellow in a long flannel gown and a tall white night-cap with a tassel to it, who sat by the fire with a bellows under his arm by way of bagpipe, from which he forced the asthmatical music that had bothered my grandfather. As he played, too, he kept twitching about with a thousand queer contortions, nodding his head, and bobbing about his tasselled night-cap.

My grandfather thought this very odd and mighty presumptuous, and was about to demand what business he had to play his wind instrument in another gentleman's quarters, when a new cause of astonishment met his eye. From the opposite side of the room a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a coxcombical fashion with little brass nails, got suddenly into motion, thrust out first a claw foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slided gracefully up to an easy chair of tarnished brocade, with a hole in

its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minuet about the floor.

The musician now played fiercer and fiercer, and bobbed his head and his night-cap about like mad. By degrees the dancing mania seemed to seize upon all the other pieces of furniture. The antique, long-bodied chairs paired off in couples and led down a country dance; a three-legged stool danced a hornpipe, though horribly puzzled by its supernumerary leg; while the amorous tongs seized the shovel round the waist, and whirled it about the room in a German waltz. In short, all the moveables got in motion; pirouetting, hands across, right and left, like so many devils: all except a great clothes-press, which kept curtsying and curtsying, in a corner, like a dowager, in exquisite time to the music; being rather too corpulent to dance, or, perhaps, at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, called to the musician

to strike up Paddy O'Rafferty, capered up to the clothes-press, and seized upon two handles to lead her out:——when—whirr! the whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs, and shovel slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened, and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle of the floor with the clothes-press sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off, and in his hands.

"Then, after all, this was a mere dream!" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"The divil a bit of a dream!" replied the Irishman. "There never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream."

Well, gentlemen, as the clothes-press was a mighty heavy body, and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose that two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would make a bit of a noise. Faith, the

old mansion shook as though it had mistaken it for an earthquake. The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause, but with all his haste his daughter had hurried to the scene of uproar before him. The landlord was followed by the landlady, who was followed by the bouncing bar-maid, who was followed by the simpering chambermaids, all holding together, as well as they could, such garments as they had first lain hands on; but all in a terrible hurry to see what the deuce was to pay in the chamber of the bold Dragoon.

My grandfather related the marvellous scene he had witnessed, and the broken handles of the prostrate clothes-press bore testimony to the fact. There was no contesting such evidence; particularly with a lad of my grandfather's complexion, who seemed able to make good every word either with sword or shillelah. So the landlord scratched his head and looked silly, as he was apt to do when puzzled. The landlady scratched—no, she did not scratch her head,

but she knit her brow, and did not seem half pleased with the explanation. But the landlady's daughter corroborated it by recollecting that the last person who had dwelt in that chamber was a famous juggler who had died of St. Vitus's dance, and had no doubt infected all the furniture.

This set all things to rights, particularly when the chambermaids declared that they had all witnessed strange carryings on in that room; and as they declared this "upon their honours," there could not remain a doubt upon the subject.

"And did your grandfather go to bed again in that room?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"That's more than I can tell. Where he passed the rest of the night was a secret he never disclosed. In fact, though he had seen much service, he was but indifferently acquainted with geography, and apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night which it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning."

"Was he ever apt to walk in his sleep?" said the knowing old gentleman.

"Never, that I heard of."

There was a little pause after this rigmarole Irish romance, when the old gentleman in the haunted head observed, that the stories hitherto related had rather a burlesque tendency. "I recollect an adventure, however," added he, "which I heard of during a residence at Paris, for the truth of which I can undertake to vouch, and which is of a very grave and singular nature."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GERMAN STUDENT.

On a stormy night, in the tempestuous times of the French revolution, a young German was returning to his lodgings, at a late hour, across the old part of Paris. The lightning gleamed, and the loud claps of thunder rattled through the lofty, narrow streets—but I should first tell you something about this young German.

Gottfried Wolfgang was a young man of good family. He had studied for some time at Göttingen, but being of a visionary and enthusiastic character, he had wandered into those wild and speculative doctrines which have so often bewildered German students. His secluded life, his intense application, and the singular nature

of his studies, had an effect on both mind and body. His health was impaired; his imagination diseased. He had been indulging in fanciful speculations on spiritual essences until, like Swedenborg, he had an ideal world of his own around him. He took up a notion, I do not know from what cause, that there was an evil influence hanging over him; an evil genius or spirit seeking to ensnare him and ensure his perdition. Such an idea working on his melancholy temperament produced the most gloomy effects. He became haggard and desponding. His friends discovered the mental malady that was preying upon him, and determined that the best cure was a change of scene; he was sent, therefore, to finish his studies amidst the splendours and gaieties of Paris.

Wolfgang arrived at Paris at the breaking out of the revolution. The popular delirium at first caught his enthusiastic mind, and he was captivated by the political and philosophical theories of the day: but the scenes of blood which followed shocked his sensitive nature;

disgusted him with society and the world, and made him more than ever a recluse. He shut himself up in a solitary apartment in the *Pays Latin*, the quarter of students. There in a gloomy street not far from the monastic walls of the Sorbonne, he pursued his favourite speculations. Sometimes he spent hours together in the great libraries of Paris, those catacombs of departed authors, rummaging among their hoards of dusty and obsolete works in quest of food for his unhealthy appetite. He was, in a manner, a literary goul, feeding in the charnel-house of decayed literature.

Wolfgang, though solitary and recluse, was of an ardent temperament, but for a time it operated merely upon his imagination. He was too shy and ignorant of the world to make any advances to the fair, but he was a passionate admirer of female beauty, and in his lonely chamber would often lose himself in reveries on forms and faces which he had seen, and his fancy would deck out images of loveliness far surpassing the reality.

While his mind was in this excited and sublimated state, he had a dream which produced an extraordinary effect upon him. It was of a female face of transcendent beauty. So strong was the impression it made, that he dreamt of it again and again. It haunted his thoughts by day, his slumbers by night; in fine he became passionately enamoured of this shadow of a dream. This lasted so long, that it became one of those fixed ideas which haunt the minds of melancholy men, and are at times mistaken for madness.

Such was Gottfried Wolfgang, and such his situation at the time I mentioned. He was returning home late one stormy night, through some of the old and gloomy streets of the *Marais*, the ancient part of Paris. The loud claps of thunder rattled among the high houses of the narrow streets. He came to the Place de Grève, the square where public executions are performed. The lightning quivered about the pinnacles of the ancient Hôtel de Ville, and shed flickering gleams over the open space in front.

As Wolfgang was crossing the square, he shrunk back with horror at finding himself close by the guillotine. It was the height of the reign of terror, when this dreadful instrument of death stood ever ready, and its scaffold was continually running with the blood of the virtuous and the brave. It had that very day been actively employed in the work of carnage, and there it stood in grim array amidst a silent and sleeping city, waiting for fresh victims.

Wolfgang's heart sickened within him, and he was turning shuddering from the horrible engine, when he beheld a shadowy form cowering as it were at the foot of the steps which led up to the scaffold. A succession of vivid flashes of lightning revealed it more distinctly. It was a female figure, dressed in black. She was seated on one of the lower steps of the scaffold, leaning forward, her face hid in her lap, and her long dishevelled tresses hanging to the ground, streaming with the rain which fell in torrents. Wolfgang paused. There was something awful in this solitary monument of

woe. The female had the appearance of being above the common order. He knew the times to be full of vicissitude, and that many a fair head, which had once been pillowed on down, now wandered houseless. Perhaps this was some poor mourner whom the dreadful axe had rendered desolate, and who sat here heartbroken on the strand of existence, from which all that was dear to her had been launched into eternity.

He approached, and addressed her in the accents of sympathy. She raised her head and gazed wildly at him. What was his astonishment at beholding, by the bright glare of the lightning, the very face which had haunted him in his dreams. It was pale and disconsolate, but ravishingly beautiful.

Trembling with violent and conflicting emotions, Wolfgang again accosted her. He spoke something of her being exposed at such an hour of the night, and to the fury of such a storm, and offered to conduct her to her friends. She pointed to the guillotine with a gesture of dreadful signification.

"I have no friend on earth!" said she.

"But you have a home," said Wolfgang.

"Yes—in the grave!"

The heart of the student melted at the words.

"If a stranger dare make an offer," said he, "without danger of being misunderstood, I would offer my humble dwelling as a shelter; myself as a devoted friend. I am friendless myself in Paris, and a stranger in the land; but if my life could be of service, it is at your disposal, and should be sacrificed before harm or indignity should come to you."

There was an honest earnestness in the young man's manner that had its effect. His foreign accent, too, was in his favour; it showed him not to be a hackneyed inhabitant of Paris. Indeed there is an eloquence in true enthusiasm that is not to be doubted. The homeless stranger confided herself implicitly to the protection of the student.

He supported her faltering steps across the Pont Neuf, and by the place where the statue of Henry the Fourth had been overthrown by

the populace. The storm had abated, and the thunder rumbled at a distance. All Paris was quiet; that great volcano of human passion slumbered for a while, to gather fresh strength for the next day's eruption. The student conducted his charge through the ancient streets of the *Pays Latin*, and by the dusky walls of the Sorbonne to the great, dingy hotel which he inhabited. The old portress who admitted them stared with surprise at the unusual sight of the melancholy Wolfgang with a female companion.

On entering his apartment, the student, for the first time, blushed at the scantiness and indifference of his dwelling. He had but one chamber—an old fashioned saloon—heavily carved and fantastically furnished with the remains of former magnificence, for it was one of those hotels in the quarter of the Luxembourg palace which had once belonged to nobility. It was lumbered with books and papers, and all the usual apparatus of a student, and his bed stood in a recess at one end.

When lights were brought, and Wolfgang

had a better opportunity of contemplating the stranger, he was more than ever intoxicated by her beauty. Her face was pale, but of a dazzling fairness, set off by a profusion of raven hair that hung clustering about it. Her eyes were large and brilliant, with a singular expression that approached almost to wildness. As far as her black dress permitted her shape to be seen, it was of perfect symmetry. Her whole appearance was highly striking, though she was dressed in the simplest style. The only thing approaching to an ornament which she wore was a broad, black band round her neck, clasped by diamonds.

The perplexity now commenced with the student how to dispose of the helpless being thus thrown upon his protection. He thought of abandoning his chamber to her, and seeking shelter for himself elsewhere. Still he was so fascinated by her charms, there seemed to be such a spell upon his thoughts and senses, that he could not tear himself from her presence. Her manner, too, was singular and unaccount-

able. She spoke no more of the guillotine. Her grief had abated. The attentions of the student had first won her confidence, and then, apparently, her heart. She was evidently an enthusiast like himself, and enthusiasts soon understand each other.

In the infatuation of the moment Wolfgang avowed his passion for her. He told her the story of his mysterious dream, and how she had possessed his heart before he had even seen her. She was strangely affected by his recital, and acknowledged to have felt an impulse toward him equally unaccountable. It was the time for wild theory and wild actions. Old prejudices and superstitions were done away; every thing was under the sway of the "Goddess of reason." Among other rubbish of the old times, the forms and ceremonies of marriage began to be considered superfluous bonds for honourable minds. Social compacts were the vogue. Wolfgang was too much of a theorist not to be tainted by the liberal doctrines of the day.

"Why should we separate?" said he: "our hearts are united; in the eye of reason and honour we are as one. What need is there of sordid forms to bind high souls together?"

The stranger listened with emotion: she had evidently received illumination at the same school.

"You have no home nor family," continued he; "let me be every thing to you, or rather let us be every thing to one another. If form is necessary, form shall be observed—there is my hand. I pledge myself to you for ever."

"For ever?" said the stranger, solemnly.

"For ever!" repeated Wolfgang.

The stranger clasped the hand extended to her: "Then I am yours," murmured she, and sunk upon his bosom.

The next morning the student left his bride sleeping, and sallied forth at an early hour to seek more spacious apartments, suitable to the change in his situation. When he returned, he found the stranger lying with her head hanging over the bed, and one arm thrown over it. He

spoke to her, but received no reply. He advanced to awaken her from her uneasy posture. On taking her hand, it was cold—there was no pulsation—her face was pallid and ghastly.—In a word—she was a corpse.

Horrified and frantic, he alarmed the house. A scene of confusion ensued. The police was summoned. As the officer of police entered the room, he started back on beholding the corpse.

"Great heaven!" cried he, "how did this woman come here?"

"Do you know any thing about her?" said Wolfgang, eagerly.

"Do I?" exclaimed the police officer: "she was guillotined yesterday!"

He stepped forward; undid the black collar round the neck of the corpse, and the head rolled on the floor!

The student burst into a frenzy. "The fiend! the fiend has gained possession of me!" shrieked he: "I am lost for ever!"

They tried to soothe him, but in vain. He was possessed with the frightful belief that an evil

spirit had reanimated the dead body to ensnare him. He went distracted, and died in a madhouse.

Here the old gentleman with the haunted head finished his narrative.

"And is this really a fact?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A fact not to be doubted," replied the other. "I had it from the best authority. The student told it me himself. I saw him in a madhouse at Paris*."

* The latter part of the above story is founded on an anecdote related to me, and said to exist in print in French. I have not met with it in print.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.

As one story of the kind produces another, and as all the company seemed fully engrossed by the subject, and disposed to bring their relatives and ancestors upon the scene, there is no knowing how many more strange adventures we might have heard, had not a corpulent old fox-hunter, who had slept soundly through the whole, now suddenly awakened, with a loud and long-drawn yawn. The sound broke the charm: the ghosts took to flight as though it had been cock-crowing, and there was an universal move for bed.

"And now for the haunted chamber," said the Irish Captain, taking his candle.

"Ay, who's to be the hero of the night?" said the gentleman with the ruined head.

"That we shall see in the morning," said the

old gentleman with the nose: "whoever looks pale and grizzly will have seen the ghost."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Baronet, "there's many a true thing said in jest—In fact, one of you will sleep in the room to-night——"

"What—a haunted room?—a haunted room? —I claim the adventure—and I—and I—and I," said a dozen guests, talking and laughing at the same time.

"No, no," said mine host, "there is a secret about one of my rooms on which I feel disposed to try an experiment: so, gentlemen, none of you shall know who has the haunted chamber until circumstances reveal it. I will not even know it myself, but will leave it to chance and the allotment of the housekeeper. At the same time, if it will be any satisfaction to you, I will observe, for the honour of my paternal mansion, that there's scarcely a chamber in it but is well worthy of being haunted."

We now separated for the night, and each went to his allotted room. Mine was in one wing of the building, and I could not but smile

at the resemblance in style to those eventful apartments described in the tales of the supper table. It was spacious and gloomy, decorated with lamp-black portraits; a bed of ancient damask, with a tester sufficiently lofty to grace a couch of state, and a number of massive pieces of old-fashioned furniture. I drew a great claw-footed arm-chair before the wide fire-place; stirred up the fire; sat looking into it, and musing upon the odd stories I had heard, until, partly overcome by the fatigue of the day's hunting, and partly by the wine and wassail of mine host, I fell asleep in my chair.

The uneasiness of my position made my slumber troubled, and laid me at the mercy of all kinds of wild and fearful dreams. Now it was that my perfidious dinner and supper rose in rebellion against my peace. I was hag-ridden by a fat saddle of mutton; a plum pudding weighed like lead upon my conscience; the merry-thought of a capon filled me with horrible suggestions; and a deviled-leg of a turkey stalked in all kinds of diabolical shapes through my imagina-

tion. In short, I had a violent fit of the nightmare. Some strange indefinite evil seemed hanging over me that I could not avert; something terrible and loathsome oppressed me that I could not shake off. I was conscious of being asleep, and strove to rouse myself, but every effort redoubled the evil; until gasping, struggling, almost strangling, I suddenly sprang bolt upright in my chair and awoke.

The light on the mantel-piece had burnt low, and the wick was divided; there was a great winding-sheet made by the dripping wax on the side towards me. The disordered taper emitted a broad flaring flame, and threw a strong light on a painting over the fire-place which I had not hitherto observed. It consisted merely of a head, or rather a face, that appeared to be staring full upon me, and with an expression that was startling. It was without a frame, and at the first glance I could hardly persuade myself that it was not a real face thrusting itself out of the dark oaken pannel. I sat in my chair gazing at it, and the more I gazed the more it dis-

quieted me. I had never before been affected in the same way by any painting. The emotions it caused were strange and indefinite. They were something like what I have heard ascribed to the eyes of the basilisk, or like that mysterious influence in reptiles termed fascination. I passed my hand over my eyes several times, as if seeking instinctively to brush away the illusion—in vain. They instantly reverted to the picture, and its chilling, creeping influence over my flesh and blood was redoubled. I looked round the room on other pictures, either to divert my attention or to see whether the same effect would be produced by them. Some of them were grim enough to produce the effect, if the mere grimness of the painting produced it.—No such thing—my eye passed over them all with perfect indifference, but the moment it reverted to this visage over the fire-place, it was as if an electric shock darted through me. The other pictures were dim and faded, but this one protruded from a plain back ground in the strongest relief, and with wonderful truth of

colouring. The expression was that of agony—the agony of intense bodily pain; but a menace scowled upon the brow, and a few sprinklings of blood added to its ghastliness. Yet it was not all these characteristics; it was some horror of the mind, some inscrutable antipathy awakened by this picture, which harrowed up my feelings.

I tried to persuade myself that this was chimerical; that my brain was confused by the fumes of mine host's good cheer, and in some measure by the odd stories about paintings which had been told at supper. I determined to shake off these vapours of the mind; rose from my chair; walked about the room; snapped my fingers; rallied myself; laughed aloud.—It was a forced laugh, and the echo of it in the old chamber jarred upon my ear.—I walked to the window, and tried to discern the landscape through the glass. It was pitch darkness, and howling storm without; and as I heard the wind moan among the trees, I caught a reflection of this accursed visage in the pane of glass, as though it were staring through the window at me. Even the reflection of it was thrilling.

How was this vile nervous fit, for such I now persuaded myself it was, to be conquered? I determined to force myself not to look at the painting, but to undress quickly and get into bed.—I began to undress, but in spite of every effort I could not keep myself from stealing a glance every now and then at the picture; and a glance was now sufficient to distress me. Even when my back was turned to it, the idea of this strange face behind me, peeping over my shoulder, was insupportable. I threw off my clothes and hurried into bed, but still this visage gazed upon me. I had a full view of it from my bed, and for some time could not take my eyes from it. I had grown nervous to a dismal degree. I put out the light, and tried to force myself to sleep—all in vain. The fire gleaming up a little threw an uncertain light about the room, leaving however the region of the picture in deep shadow. What, thought I, if this be the chamber about which mine host spoke as having a mystery reigning over it? I had taken his words merely as spoken in jest;

might they have a real import? I looked around. —The faintly-lighted apartment had all the qualifications requisite for a haunted chamber. It began in my infected imagination to assume strange appearances—the old portraits turned paler and paler, and blacker and blacker; the streaks of light and shadow thrown among the quaint articles of furniture gave them more singular shapes and characters.—There was a huge dark clothes' press of antique form, gorgeous in brass and lustrous with wax, that began to grow oppressive to me.

"Am I then," thought I, "indeed the hero of the haunted room? Is there really a spell laid upon me, or is this all some contrivance of mine host to raise a laugh at my expense?" The idea of being hag-ridden by my own fancy all night, and then bantered on my haggard looks the next day, was intolerable; but the very idea was sufficient to produce the effect, and to render me still more nervous.—"Pish"—said I, "it can be no such thing. How could my worthy host imagine that I, or any man, would

be so worried by a mere picture? It is my own diseased imagination that torments me."

I turned in bed, and shifted from side to side to try to fall asleep; but all in vain; when one cannot get asleep by lying quiet, it is seldom that tossing about will effect the purpose. The fire gradually went out, and left the room in darkness. Still I had the idea of that inexplicable countenance gazing and keeping watch upon me through the gloom—nay, what was worse, the very darkness seemed to magnify its terrors. It was like having an unseen enemy hanging about one in the night. Instead of having one picture now to worry me, I had a hundred. I fancied it in every direction—"And there it is," thought I, "and there! and there! with its horrible and mysterious expression still gazing and gazing on me! No—if I must suffer this strange and dismal influence, it were better face a single foe than thus be haunted by a thousand images of it."

Whoever has been in a state of nervous agitation, must know that the longer it continues

the more uncontrollable it grows. The very air of the chamber seemed at length infected by the baleful presence of this picture. I fancied it hovering over me. I almost felt the fearful visage from the wall approaching my face—it seemed breathing upon me. "This is not to be borne," said I at length, springing out of bed: "I can stand this no longer—I shall only tumble and toss about here all night; make a very spectre of myself, and become the hero of the haunted chamber in good earnest.—Whatever be the ill consequence, I 'll quit this cursed room and seek a night's rest elsewhere—they can but laugh at me, at all events, and they 'll be sure to have the laugh upon me if I pass a sleepless night, and show them a haggard and wo-begone visage in the morning."

All this was half-muttered to myself as I hastily slipped on my clothes, which having done, I groped my way out of the room, and down stairs to the drawing-room. Here, after tumbling over two or three pieces of furniture, I made out to reach a sofa, and stretching myself

upon it, determined to bivouac there for the night. The moment I found myself out of the neighbourhood of that strange picture, it seemed as if the charm were broken. All its influence was at an end. I felt assured that it was confined to its own dreary chamber, for I had, with a sort of instinctive caution, turned the key when I closed the door. I soon calmed down, therefore, into a state of tranquillity; from that into a drowsiness, and, finally, into a deep sleep; out of which I did not awake until the housemaid, with her besom and her matin song, came to put the room in order. She stared at finding me stretched upon the sofa, but I presume circumstances of the kind were not uncommon after hunting dinners in her master's bachelor establishment, for she went on with her song and her work, and took no further heed of me.

I had an unconquerable repugnance to return to my chamber; so I found my way to the butler's quarters, made my toilet in the best way circumstances would permit, and was among

the first to appear at the breakfast-table. Our breakfast was a substantial fox-hunter's repast, and the company generally assembled at it. When ample justice had been done to the tea, coffee, cold meats, and humming ale, for all these were furnished in abundance, according to the tastes of the different guests, the conversation began to break out with all the liveliness and freshness of morning mirth.

"But who is the hero of the haunted chamber, who has seen the ghost last night?" said the inquisitive gentleman, rolling his lobster eyes about the table.

The question set every tongue in motion; a vast deal of bantering, criticising of countenances, of mutual accusation and retort, took place. Some had drunk deep, and some were unshaven; so that there were suspicious faces enough in the assembly. I alone could not enter with ease and vivacity into the joke—I felt tongue-tied, embarrassed. A recollection of what I had seen and felt the preceding night still haunted my mind. It seemed as if the

mysterious picture still held a thrall upon me. I thought also that our host's eye was turned on me with an air of curiosity. In short, I was conscious that I was the hero of the night, and felt as if every one might read it in my looks. The joke, however, passed over, and no suspicion seemed to attach to me. I was just congratulating myself on my escape, when a servant came in, saying, that the gentleman who had slept on the sofa in the drawing-room had left his watch under one of the pillows. My repeater was in his hand.

"What!" said the inquisitive gentleman, "did any gentleman sleep on the sofa?"

"Soho! soho! a hare—a hare!" cried the old gentleman with the flexible nose.

I could not avoid acknowledging the watch, and was rising in great confusion, when a boisterous old squire who sat beside me exclaimed, slapping me on the shoulder, "'Sblood, lad, thou 'rt the man as has seen the ghost!"

The attention of the company was immediately turned to me: if my face had been pale

the moment before, it now glowed almost to burning. I tried to laugh, but could only make a grimace, and found the muscles of my face twitching at sixes and sevens, and totally out of all control.

It takes but little to raise a laugh among a set of fox-hunters; there was a world of merriment and joking on the subject, and as I never relished a joke overmuch when it was at my own expense, I began to feel a little nettled. I tried to look cool and calm, and to restrain my pique; but the coolness and calmness of a man in a passion are confounded treacherous.

"Gentlemen," said I, with a slight cocking of the chin and a bad attempt at a smile, "this is all very pleasant—ha! ha!—very pleasant—but I'd have you know, I am as little superstitious as any of you—ha! ha!—and as to any thing like timidity—you may smile, gentlemen, but I trust there's no one here means to insinuate, that—as to a room's being haunted—I repeat, gentlemen (growing a little warm at seeing a cursed grin breaking out round me), as to a room's

being haunted, I have as little faith in such silly stories as any one. But, since you put the matter home to me, I will say that I have met with something in my room strange and inexplicable to me. (A shout of laughter.) Gentlemen, I am serious; I know well what I am saying; I am calm, gentlemen (striking my fist upon the table); by Heaven, I am calm. I am neither trifling, nor do I wish to be trifled with. (The laughter of the company suppressed, and with ludicrous attempts at gravity.) There is a picture in the room in which I was put last night that has had an effect upon me the most singular and incomprehensible."

"A picture?" said the old gentleman with the haunted head. "A picture!" cried the narrator with the nose. "A picture! a picture!" echoed several voices. Here there was an ungovernable peal of laughter. I could not contain myself. I started up from my seat; looked round on the company with fiery indignation; thrust both my hands into my pockets, and strode up to one of the windows as though I

would have walked through it. I stopped short, looked out upon the landscape without distinguishing a feature of it, and felt my gorge rising almost to suffocation.

Mine host saw it was time to interfere. He had maintained an air of gravity through the whole of the scene; and now stepped forth as if to shelter me from the overwhelming merriment of my companions.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I dislike to spoil sport, but you have had your laugh, and the joke of the haunted chamber has been enjoyed. I must now take the part of my guest. I must not only vindicate him from your pleasantries, but I must reconcile him to himself, for I suspect he is a little out of humour with his own feelings; and, above all, I must crave his pardon for having made him the subject of a kind of experiment. Yes, gentlemen, there is something strange and peculiar in the chamber to which our friend was shown last night; there is a picture in my house which possesses a singular and

mysterious influence; and with which there is connected a very curious story. It is a picture to which I attach a value from a variety of circumstances; and though I have often been tempted to destroy it, from the odd and uncomfortable sensations which it produces in every one that beholds it, yet I have never been able to prevail upon myself to make the sacrifice. It is a picture I never like to look upon myself, and which is held in awe by all my servants. I have therefore banished it to a room but rarely used, and should have had it covered last night, had not the nature of our conversation, and the whimsical talk about a haunted chamber, tempted me to let it remain, by way of experiment, to see whether a stranger, totally unacquainted with its story, would be affected by it."

The words of the baronet had turned every thought into a different channel. All were anxious to hear the story of the mysterious picture; and for myself, so strangely were my feelings interested, that I forgot to feel piqued at the

experiment which my host had made upon my nerves, and joined eagerly in the general entreaty. As the morning was stormy, and denied all egress, my host was glad of any means of entertaining his company; so drawing his arm-chair towards the fire, he began.—

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

MANY years since, when I was a young man, and had just left Oxford, I was sent on the grand tour to finish my education. I believe my parents had tried in vain to inoculate me with wisdom; so they sent me to mingle with society, in hopes I might take it the natural way. Such, at least, appears the reason for which nine-tenths of our youngsters are sent abroad. In the course of my tour I remained some time at Venice. The romantic character of the place delighted me; I was very much amused by the air of adventure and intrigue that prevailed in this region of masks and gondolas; and I was exceedingly smitten by a pair of languishing black eyes, that played upon my heart from under an Italian mantle: so I persuaded myself that I

was lingering at Venice to study men and manners;—at least, I persuaded my friends so, and that answered all my purpose

I was a little prone to be struck by peculiarities in character and conduct, and my imagination was so full of romantic associations with Italy, that I was always on the look out for adventure. Every thing chimed in with such a humour in this old mermaid of a city. My suite of apartments were in a proud, melancholy palace on the grand canal, formerly the residence of a magnifico, and sumptuous with the traces of decayed grandeur. My gondolier was one of the shrewdest of his class, active, merry, intelligent, and, like his brethren, secret as the grave; that is to say, secret to all the world except his master. I had not had him a week before he put me behind all the curtains in Venice. I liked the silence and mystery of the place, and when I sometimes saw from my window a black gondola gliding mysteriously along in the dusk of the evening, with nothing visible but its little glimmering lantern, I would jump into my

own zendaletta, and give a signal for pursuit.—
"But I am running away from my subject with the recollection of youthful follies," said the Baronet, checking himself. "Let us come to the point."

Among my familiar resorts was a Cassino under the arcades on one side of the grand square of St. Mark. Here I used frequently to lounge and take my ice, on those warm summer nights when in Italy every body lives abroad until morning. I was seated here one evening, when a group of Italians took their seat at a table on the opposite side of the saloon. Their conversation was gay and animated, and carried on with Italian vivacity and gesticulation. I remarked among them one young man, however, who appeared to take no share, and find no enjoyment in the conversation, though he seemed to force himself to attend to it. He was tall and slender, and of extremely prepossessing appearance. His features were fine, though emaciated. He had a profusion of black glossy hair that curled lightly about his head, and con-

trasted with the extreme paleness of his countenance. His brow was haggard; deep furrows seemed to have been ploughed into his visage by care, not by age, for he was evidently in the prime of youth. His eye was full of expression and fire, but wild and unsteady. He seemed to be tormented by some strange fancy or apprehension. In spite of every effort to fix his attention on the conversation of his companions, I noticed that every now and then he would turn his head slowly round, give a glance over his shoulder, and then withdraw it with a sudden jerk, as if something painful had met his eye. This was repeated at intervals of about a minute, and he appeared hardly to have recovered from one shock before I saw him slowly preparing to encounter another.

After sitting some time in the Cassino, the party paid for the refreshment they had taken, and departed. The young man was the last to leave the saloon, and I remarked him glancing behind him in the same way, just as he passed out of the door. I could not resist the impulse

to rise and follow him; for I was at an age when a romantic feeling of curiosity is easily awakened. The party walked slowly down the arcades, talking and laughing as they went. They crossed the Piazzetta, but paused in the middle of it to enjoy the scene. It was one of those moonlight nights so brilliant and clear in the pure atmosphere of Italy. The moon-beams streamed on the tall tower of St. Mark, and lighted up the magnificent front and swelling domes of the cathedral. The party expressed their delight in animated terms. I kept my eye upon the young man. He alone seemed abstracted and self-occupied. I noticed the same singular, and, as it were, furtive glance, over the shoulder, which had attracted my attention in the Cassino. The party moved on, and I followed; they passed along the walk called the Broglio, turned the corner of the Ducal Palace, and getting into a gondola, glided swiftly away.

The countenance and conduct of this young man dwelt upon my mind. There was something in his appearance that interested me ex-

ceedingly. I met him a day or two after in a gallery of paintings. He was evidently a connoisseur, for he always singled out the most masterly productions, and the few remarks drawn from him by his companions showed an intimate acquaintance with the art. His own taste, however, ran on singular extremes. On Salvator Rosa in his most savage and solitary scenes; on Raphael, Titian, and Correggio in their softest delineations of female beauty; on these he would occasionally gaze with transient enthusiasm. But this seemed only a momentary forgetfulness. Still would recur that cautious glance behind, and always quickly withdrawn, as though something terrible had met his view.

I encountered him frequently afterwards at the theatre, at balls, at concerts; at the promenades in the gardens of San Georgia; at the grotesque exhibitions in the Square of St. Mark; among the throng of merchants on the exchange by the Rialto. He seemed, in fact, to seek crowds; to hunt after bustle and amusement; yet never to take any interest in either the

business or gaiety of the scene. Ever an air of painful thought, of wretched abstraction; and ever that strange and recurring movement of glancing fearfully over the shoulder. I did not know at first but this might be caused by apprehension of arrest; or, perhaps, from dread of assassination. But if so, why should he go thus continually abroad; why expose himself at all times and in all places?

I became anxious to know this stranger. I was drawn to him by that romantic sympathy which sometimes draws young men towards each other. His melancholy threw a charm about him in my eyes, which was no doubt heightened by the touching expression of his countenance, and the manly graces of his person; for manly beauty has its effect even upon men. I had an Englishman's habitual diffidence and awkwardness of address to contend with; but I subdued it, and from frequently meeting him in the Cassino, gradually edged myself into his acquaintance. I had no reserve on his part to contend with. He seemed, on the contrary, to

court society; and, in fact, to seek any thing rather than be alone.

When he found that I really took an interest in him, he threw himself entirely on my friendship. He clung to me like a drowning man. He would walk with me for hours up and down the place of St. Mark—or he would sit, until night was far advanced, in my apartments. He took rooms under the same roof with me; and his constant request was, that I would permit him, when it did not incommode me, to sit by me in my saloon. It was not that he seemed to take a particular delight in my conversation, but rather that he craved the vicinity of a human being; and, above all, of a being that sympathised with him. "I have often heard," said he, "of the sincerity of Englishmen—thank God I have one at length for a friend!"

Yet he never seemed disposed to avail himself of my sympathy other than by mere companionship. He never sought to unbosom himself to me: there appeared to be a settled cor-

roding anguish in his bosom that neither could be soothed "by silence nor by speaking."

A devouring melancholy preyed upon his heart, and seemed to be drying up the very blood in his veins. It was not a soft melancholy, the disease of the affections, but a parching, withering agony. I could see at times that his mouth was dry and feverish; he panted rather than breathed; his eyes were bloodshot; his cheeks pale and livid; with now and then faint streaks of red athwart them, baleful gleams of the fire that was consuming his heart. As my arm was within his, I felt him press it at times with a convulsive motion to his side; his hands would clench themselves involuntarily, and a kind of shudder would run through his frame.

I reasoned with him about his melancholy, and sought to draw from him the cause; he shrunk from all confiding; "Do not seek to know it," said he, "you could not relieve it if you knew it; you would not even seek to relieve it. On the contrary, I should lose your sym-

pathy, and that," said he, pressing my hand convulsively, "that I feel has become too dear to me to risk."

I endeavoured to awaken hope within him. He was young; life had a thousand pleasures in store for him; there is a healthy reaction in the youthful heart; it medicines all its own wounds—"Come, come," said I, "there is no grief so great that youth cannot outgrow it."—"No! no!" said he, clenching his teeth and striking repeatedly, with the energy of despair, on his bosom—"it is here! here! deep rooted; draining my heart's blood. It grows and grows, while my heart withers and withers. I have a dreadful monitor that gives me no repose—that follows me step by step—and will follow me step by step, until it pushes me into my grave!"

As he said this, he involuntarily gave one of those fearful glances over his shoulder, and shrunk back with more than usual horror. I could not resist the temptation to allude to this movement, which I supposed to be some mere malady of the nerves. The moment I men-

tioned it, his face became crimsoned and convulsed; he grasped me by both hands—

"For God's sake," exclaimed he, with a piercing voice, "never allude to that again.—Let us avoid this subject, my friend; you cannot relieve me, indeed you cannot relieve me, but you may add to the torments I suffer.—At some future day you shall know all."

I never resumed the subject; for however much my curiosity might be roused, I felt too true a compassion for his sufferings to increase them by my intrusion. I sought various ways to divert his mind, and to arouse him from the constant meditations in which he was plunged. He saw my efforts, and seconded them as far as in his power, for there was nothing moody nor wayward in his nature. On the contrary, there was something frank, generous, unassuming in his whole deportment. All the sentiments that he uttered were noble and lofty. He claimed no indulgence; he asked no toleration. He seemed content to carry his load of misery in silence, and only sought to carry it by my side. There

was a mute beseeching manner about him, as if he craved companionship as a charitable boon; and a tacit thankfulness in his looks, as if he felt grateful to me for not repulsing him.

I felt this melancholy to be infectious. It stole over my spirits; interfered with all my gay pursuits, and gradually saddened my life; yet I could not prevail upon myself to shake off a being who seemed to hang upon me for support. In truth, the generous traits of character that beamed through all this gloom had penetrated to my heart. His bounty was lavish and open-handed: his charity melting and spontaneous. Not confined to mere donations, which humiliate as much as they relieve. The tone of his voice, the beam of his eye, enhanced every gift, and surprised the poor suppliant with that rarest and sweetest of charities, the charity not merely of the hand but of the heart. Indeed his liberality seemed to have something in it of self-abasement and expiation. He, in a manner, humbled himself before the mendicant. "What

right have I to ease and affluence"—would he murmur to himself—"when innocence wanders in misery and rags?"

The carnival time arrived. I hoped that the gay scenes which then presented themselves might have some cheering effect. I mingled with him in the motley throng that crowded the place of St. Mark. We frequented operas, masquerades, balls—all in vain. The evil kept growing on him. He became more and more haggard and agitated. Often, after we have returned from one of these scenes of revelry, I have entered his room and found him lying on his face on the sofa; his hands clenched in his fine hair, and his whole countenance bearing traces of the convulsions of his mind.

The carnival passed away; the time of Lent succeeded; passion-week arrived; we attended one evening a solemn service in one of the churches, in the course of which a grand piece of vocal and instrumental music was performed, relating to the death of our Saviour.

I had remarked that he was always powerfully affected by music; on this occasion he was so in an extraordinary degree. As the pealing notes swelled through the lofty aisles, he seemed to kindle with fervour; his eyes rolled upwards, until nothing but the whites were visible; his hands were clasped together, until the fingers were deeply imprinted in the flesh. When the music expressed the dying agony, his face gradually sunk upon his knees; and at the touching words resounding through the church, "*Jesu mori,*" sobs burst from him uncontrolled. —I had never seen him weep before. His had always been agony rather than sorrow. I augured well from the circumstance, and let him weep on uninterrupted. When the service was ended, we left the church. He hung on my arm as we walked homewards with something of a softer and more subdued manner, instead of that nervous agitation I had been accustomed to witness. He alluded to the service we had heard. "Music," said he, "is indeed the voice of heaven; never before have I felt more impressed by

the story of the atonement of our Saviour—Yes, my friend," said he, clasping his hands with a kind of transport, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

We parted for the night. His room was not far from mine, and I heard him for some time busied in it. I fell asleep, but was awakened before daylight. The young man stood by my bedside, dressed for travelling. He held a sealed packet and a large parcel in his hand, which he laid on the table.

"Farewell, my friend," said he, "I am about to set forth on a long journey; but, before I go, I leave with you these remembrances. In this packet you will find the particulars of my story.—When you read them I shall be far away; do not remember me with aversion—You have been indeed a friend to me.—You have poured oil into a broken heart, but you could not heal it.—Farewell! let me kiss your hand—I am unworthy to embrace you." He sunk on his knees—seized my hand in despite of my efforts to the contrary, and covered it with kisses. I was so

surprised by all the scene, that I had not been able to say a word.—"But we shall meet again," said I hastily, as I saw him hurrying towards the door. "Never, never, in this world!" said he solemnly.—He sprang once more to my bed-side—seized my hand, pressed it to his heart and to his lips, and rushed out of the room.

Here the Baronet paused. He seemed lost in thought, and sat looking upon the floor, and drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"And did this mysterious personage return?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Never!" replied the Baronet, with a pensive shake of the head—"I never saw him again."

"And pray what has all this to do with the picture?" inquired the old gentleman with the nose.

"True," said the questioner—"Is it the portrait of that crack-brained Italian?"

"No," said the Baronet, dryly, not half liking the appellation given to his hero—"but this picture was enclosed in the parcel he left with me. The sealed packet contained its explana-

tion. There was a request on the outside that I would not open it until six months had elapsed. I kept my promise, in spite of my curiosity. I have a translation of it by me, and had meant to read it, by way of accounting for the mystery of the chamber; but I fear I have already detained the company too long."

Here there was a general wish expressed to have the manuscript read, particularly on the part of the inquisitive gentleman; so the worthy Baronet drew out a fairly written manuscript, and, wiping his spectacles, read aloud the following story.—

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ITALIAN.

I WAS born at Naples. My parents, though of noble rank, were limited in fortune, or rather, my father was ostentatious beyond his means, and expended so much on his palace, his equipage, and his retinue, that he was continually straitened in his pecuniary circumstances. I was a younger son, and looked upon with indifference by my father, who, from a principle of family pride, wished to leave all his property to my elder brother. I showed, when quite a child, an extreme sensibility. Every thing affected me violently. While yet an infant in my mother's arms, and before I had learnt to talk, I could be wrought upon to a wonderful degree of anguish or delight by the power of music. As I grew older, my feelings remained equally acute, and I

was easily transported into paroxysms of pleasure or rage. It was the amusement of my relations and of the domestics to play upon this irritable temperament. I was moved to tears, tickled to laughter, provoked to fury, for the entertainment of company, who were amused by such a tempest of mighty passion in a pigmy frame—they little thought, or perhaps little heeded the dangerous sensibilities they were fostering. I thus became a little creature of passion before reason was developed. In a short time I grew too old to be a plaything, and then I became a torment. The tricks and passions I had been teased into became irksome, and I was disliked by my teachers for the very lessons they had taught me. My mother died; and my power as a spoiled child was at an end. There was no longer any necessity to humour or tolerate me, for there was nothing to be gained by it, as I was no favourite of my father. I therefore experienced the fate of a spoiled child in such situation, and was neglected, or noticed only to be crossed and contradicted. Such was the early

treatment of a heart, which, if I can judge of it at all, was naturally disposed to the extremes of tenderness and affection.

My father, as I have already said, never liked me—in fact, he never understood me; he looked upon me as wilful and wayward, as deficient in natural affection.—It was the stateliness of his own manner, the loftiness and grandeur of his own look, that had repelled me from his arms. I always pictured him to myself as I had seen him, clad in his senatorial robes, rustling with pomp and pride. The magnificence of his person had daunted my young imagination. I could never approach him with the confiding affection of a child.

My father's feelings were wrapped up in my elder brother. He was to be the inheritor of the family title and the family dignity, and every thing was sacrificed to him—I, as well as every thing else. It was determined to devote me to the church, that so my humours and myself might be removed out of the way, either of tasking my father's time and trouble, or inter-

fering with the interests of my brother. At an early age, therefore, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights, or known any thing of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace, I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care.

My uncle was a man totally estranged from the world: he had never relished, for he had never tasted, its pleasures; and he considered rigid self-denial as the great basis of Christian virtue. He considered every one's temperament like his own; or at least he made them conform to it. His character and habits had an influence over the fraternity of which he was superior—a more gloomy, saturnine set of beings were never assembled together. The convent, too, was calculated to awaken sad and solitary thoughts. It was situated in a gloomy gorge of those mountains away south of Vesuvius. All distant views were shut out by sterile volcanic heights. A mountain-stream raved beneath its walls, and eagles screamed about its turrets.

I had been sent to this place at so tender an age as soon to lose all distinct recollection of the scenes I had left behind. As my mind expanded, therefore, it formed its idea of the world from the convent and its vicinity, and a dreary world it appeared to me. An early tinge of melancholy was thus infused into my character; and the dismal stories of the monks, about devils and evil spirits, with which they affrighted my young imagination, gave me a tendency to superstition which I could never effectually shake off. They took the same delight to work upon my ardent feelings, that had been so mischievously executed by my father's household. I can recollect the horrors with which they fed my heated fancy during an eruption of Vesuvius. We were distant from that volcano, with mountains between us; but its convulsive throes shook the solid foundations of nature. Earthquakes threatened to topple down our convent towers. A lurid, baleful light hung in the heavens at night, and showers of ashes, borne by the wind, fell in our narrow valley. The monks talked of

the earth being honey-combed beneath us; of streams of molten lava raging through its veins; of caverns of sulphurous flames roaring in the centre, the abodes of demons and the damned; of fiery gulfs ready to yawn beneath our feet. —All these tales were told to the doleful accompaniment of the mountain's thunders, whose low bellowing made the walls of our convent vibrate.

One of the monks had been a painter, but had retired from the world, and embraced this dismal life in expiation of some crime. He was a melancholy man, who pursued his art in the solitude of his cell, but made it a source of penance to him. His employment was to portray, either on canvas or in waxen models, the human face and human form, in the agonies of death, and in all the stages of dissolution and decay. The fearful mysteries of the charnel-house were unfolded in his labours. The loathsome banquet of the beetle and the worm—I turn with shuddering even from the recollection of his works. Yet, at the time, my strong but ill-directed imagination seized with ardour upon

his instructions in his art. Any thing was a variety from the dry studies and monotonous duties of the cloister. In a little while I became expert with my pencil, and my gloomy productions were thought worthy of decorating some of the altars of the chapel.

In this dismal way was a creature of feeling and fancy brought up. Every thing genial and amiable in my nature was repressed, and nothing brought out but what was unprofitable and ungracious. I was ardent in my temperament; quick, mercurial, impetuous; formed to be a creature all love and adoration; but a leaden hand was laid on all my finer qualities. I was taught nothing but fear and hatred. I hated my uncle. I hated the monks. I hated the convent in which I was immured. I hated the world; and I almost hated myself for being, as I supposed, so hating and hateful an animal.

When I had nearly attained the age of sixteen, I was suffered, on one occasion, to accompany one of the brethren on a mission to a distant part of the country. We soon left

behind us the gloomy valley in which I had been pent up for so many years, and after a short journey among the mountains, emerged upon the voluptuous landscape that spreads itself about the Bay of Naples. Heavens! how transported was I, when I stretched my gaze over a vast reach of delicious sunny country, gay with groves and vineyards; with Vesuvius rearing its forked summit to my right; the blue Mediterranean to my left, with its enchanting coast, studded with shining towns and sumptuous villas; and Naples, my native Naples, gleaming far, far in the distance.

Good God! was this the lovely world from which I had been excluded? I had reached that age when the sensibilities are in all their bloom and freshness. Mine had been checked and chilled. They now burst forth with the suddenness of a retarded spring. My heart, hitherto unnaturally shrunk up, expanded into a riot of vague but delicious emotions. The beauty of nature intoxicated—bewildered me. The song of the peasants; their cheerful looks; their

happy avocations; the picturesque gaiety of their dresses; their rustic music; their dances; all broke upon me like witchcraft. My soul responded to the music, my heart danced in my bosom. All the men appeared amiable, all the women lovely.

I returned to the convent, that is to say, my body returned, but my heart and soul never entered there again. I could not forget this glimpse of a beautiful and a happy world—a world so suited to my natural character. I had felt so happy while in it; so different a being from what I felt myself when in the convent—that tomb of the living. I contrasted the countenances of the beings I had seen, full of fire and freshness, and enjoyment, with the pallid, leaden, lack-lustre visages of the monks; the music of the dance with the droning chant of the chapel. I had before found the exercises of the cloister wearisome; they now became intolerable. The dull round of duties wore away my spirit; my nerves became irritated by the fretful tinkling of the convent-bell, evermore dinging among

the mountain echoes, evermore calling me from my repose at night, my pencil by day, to attend to some tedious and mechanical ceremony of devotion.

I was not of a nature to meditate long without putting my thoughts into action. My spirit had been suddenly aroused, and was now all awake within me. I watched an opportunity, fled from the convent, and made my way on foot to Naples. As I entered its gay and crowded streets, and beheld the variety and stir of life around me, the luxury of palaces, the splendour of equipages, and the pantomimic animation of the motley populace, I seemed as if awakened to a world of enchantment, and solemnly vowed that nothing should force me back to the monotony of the cloister.

I had to inquire my way to my father's palace, for I had been so young on leaving it that I knew not its situation. I found some difficulty in getting admitted to my father's presence, for the domestics scarcely knew that there was such a being as myself in existence, and my monastic

dress did not operate in my favour. Even my father entertained no recollection of my person. I told him my name, threw myself at his feet, implored his forgiveness, and entreated that I might not be sent back to the convent.

He received me with the condescension of a patron rather than the fondness of a parent: listened patiently, but coldly, to my tale of monastic grievances and disgusts, and promised to think what else could be done for me. This coldness blighted and drove back all the frank affection of my nature, that was ready to spring forth at the least warmth of parental kindness. All my early feelings towards my father revived. I again looked up to him as the stately magnificent being that had daunted my childish imagination, and felt as if I had no pretensions to his sympathies. My brother engrossed all his care and love; he inherited his nature, and carried himself towards me with a protecting rather than a fraternal air. It wounded my pride, which was great. I could brook condescension from my father, for I looked up to him with awe, as a

superior being; but I could not brook patronage from a brother, who I felt was intellectually my inferior. The servants perceived that I was an unwelcome intruder in the paternal mansion, and, menial-like, they treated me with neglect. Thus baffled at every point, my affections outraged wherever they would attach themselves; I became sullen, silent, and desponding. My feelings driven back upon myself, entered and preyed upon my own heart. I remained for some days an unwelcome guest rather than a restored son in my father's house. I was doomed never to be properly known there. I was made, by wrong treatment, strange even to myself, and they judged of me from my strangeness.

I was startled one day at the sight of one of the monks of my convent gliding out of my father's room. He saw me, but pretended not to notice me, and this very hypocrisy made me suspect something. I had become sore and susceptible in my feelings; every thing inflicted a wound on them. In this state of mind I was treated with marked disrespect by a pampered

minion, the favourite servant of my father. All the pride and passion of my nature rose in an instant, and I struck him to the earth. My father was passing by; he stopped not to inquire the reason, nor indeed could he read the long course of mental sufferings which were the real cause. He rebuked me with anger and scorn; he summoned all the haughtiness of his nature and grandeur of his look to give weight to the contumely with which he treated me. I felt I had not deserved it. I felt that I was not appreciated. I felt that I had that within me which merited better treatment: my heart swelled against a father's injustice. I broke through my habitual awe of him—I replied to him with impatience: my hot spirit flushed in my cheek and kindled in my eye, but my sensitive heart swelled as quickly, and before I had half vented my passion, I felt it suffocated and quenched in my tears. My father was astonished and incensed at this turning of the worm, and ordered me to my chamber. I retired in silence, choking with contending emotions.

I had not been long there when I overheard voices in an adjoining apartment. It was a consultation between my father and the monk, about the means of getting me back quietly to the convent. My resolution was taken. I had no longer a home nor a father. That very night I left the paternal roof. I got on board a vessel about making sail from the harbour, and abandoned myself to the wide world. No matter to what port she steered; any part of so beautiful a world was better than my convent. No matter where I was cast by fortune; any place would be more a home to me than the home I had left behind. The vessel was bound to Genoa. We arrived there after a voyage of a few days.

As I entered the harbour between the moles which embrace it, and beheld the amphitheatre of palaces, and churches, and splendid gardens, rising one above another, I felt at once its title to the appellation of Genoa the Superb. I landed on the mole an utter stranger, without knowing what to do, or whither to direct my steps. No matter; I was released from the

thraldom of the convent and the humiliations of home. When I traversed the Strada Balbi and the Strada Nuova, those streets of palaces, and gazed at the wonders of architecture around me; when I wandered at close of day amid a gay throng of the brilliant and the beautiful, through the green alleys of the Aqua Verde, or among the colonnades and terraces of the magnificent Doria gardens; I thought it impossible to be ever otherwise than happy in Genoa.

A few days sufficed to show me my mistake. My scanty purse was exhausted, and for the first time in my life I experienced the sordid distresses of penury. I had never known the want of money, and had never adverted to the possibility of such an evil. I was ignorant of the world and all its ways; and when first the idea of destitution came over my mind, its effect was withering. I was wandering pennyless through the streets which no longer delighted my eyes, when chance led my steps into the magnificent church of the Annunciata.

A celebrated painter of the day was at that moment superintending the placing of one of his pictures over an altar. The proficiency which I had acquired in his art during my residence in the convent had made me an enthusiastic amateur. I was struck, at the first glance, with the painting. It was the face of a Madonna. So innocent, so lovely, such a divine expression of maternal tenderness! I lost, for the moment, all recollection of myself in the enthusiasm of my art. I clasped my hands together, and uttered an ejaculation of delight. The painter perceived my emotion. He was flattered and gratified by it. My air and manner pleased him, and he accosted me. I felt too much the want of friendship to repel the advances of a stranger; and there was something in this one so benevolent and winning, that in a moment he gained my confidence.

I told him my story and my situation, concealing only my name and rank. He appeared strongly interested by my recital, invited me to

his house, and from that time I became his favourite pupil. He thought he perceived in me extraordinary talents for the art, and his encomiums awakened all my ardour. What a blissful period of my existence was it that I passed beneath his roof! Another being seemed created within me; or rather, all that was amiable and excellent was drawn out. I was as recluse as ever I had been at the convent; but how different was my seclusion! My time was spent in storing my mind with lofty and poetical ideas; in meditating on all that was striking and noble in history and fiction; in studying and tracing all that was sublime and beautiful in nature. I was always a visionary, imaginative being, but now my reveries and imaginings all elevated me to rapture. I looked up to my master as to a benevolent genius that had opened to me a region of enchantment. He was not a native of Genoa, but had been drawn thither by the solicitations of several of the nobility, and had resided there but a few years, for the completion of certain works he had undertaken. His health was

delicate, and he had to confide much of the filling up of his designs to the pencils of his scholars. He considered me as particularly happy in delineating the human countenance; in seizing upon characteristic, though fleeting expressions; and fixing them powerfully upon my canvas. I was employed continually, therefore, in sketching faces, and often, when some particular grace or beauty of expression was wanted in a countenance, it was intrusted to my pencil. My benefactor was fond of bringing me forward, and partly, perhaps, through my actual skill, and partly through his partial praises, I began to be noted for the expressions of my countenances.

Among the various works which he had undertaken, was an historical piece for one of the palaces of Genoa, in which were to be introduced the likenesses of several of the family. Among these was one intrusted to my pencil. It was that of a young girl, who as yet was in a convent for her education. She came out for the purpose of sitting for the picture. I first saw her in an apartment of one of the sumptuous

palaces of Genoa. She stood before a casement that looked out upon the bay; a stream of vernal sunshine fell upon her, and shed a kind of glory round her, as it lit up the rich crimson chamber.—She was but sixteen years of age—and oh, how lovely! The scene broke upon me like a mere vision of spring and youth and beauty. I could have fallen down and worshipped her. She was like one of those fictions of poets and painters, when they would express the *beau ideal* that haunts their minds with shapes of indescribable perfection. I was permitted to sketch her countenance in various positions, and I fondly protracted the study that was undoing me. The more I gazed on her, the more I became enamoured; there was something almost painful in my intense admiration. I was but nineteen years of age, shy, diffident, and inexperienced. I was treated with attention by her mother; for my youth and my enthusiasm in my art had won favour for me; and I am inclined to think that there was something

in my air and manner that inspired interest and respect. Still the kindness with which I was treated could not dispel the embarrassment into which my own imagination threw me when in presence of this lovely being. It elevated her into something almost more than mortal. She seemed too exquisite for earthly use; too delicate and exalted for human attainment. As I sat tracing her charms on my canvas, with my eyes occasionally riveted on her features, I drank in delicious poison that made me giddy. My heart alternately gushed with tenderness, and ached with despair.—Now I became more than ever sensible of the violent fires that had lain dormant at the bottom of my soul. You who are born in a more temperate climate, and under a cooler sky, have little idea of the violence of passion in our southern bosoms.

A few days finished my task. Bianca returned to her convent, but her image remained indelibly impressed upon my heart. It dwelt in my imagination; it became my pervading

idea of beauty. It had an effect even upon my pencil. I became noted for my felicity in depicting female loveliness; it was but because I multiplied the image of Bianca. I soothed and yet fed my fancy by introducing her in all the productions of my master.—I have stood, with delight, in one of the chapels of the Annunciata, and heard the crowd extol the seraphic beauty of a Saint which I had painted. I have seen them bow down in adoration before the painting; they were bowing before the loveliness of Bianca.

I existed in this kind of dream, I might almost say delirium, for upwards of a year. Such is the tenacity of my imagination, that the image which was formed in it continued in all its power and freshness. Indeed I was a solitary, meditative being, much given to reverie, and apt to foster ideas which had once taken strong possession of me. I was roused from this fond, melancholy, delicious dream by the death of my worthy benefactor. I cannot describe the pangs his death occasioned me. It left me alone,

and almost broken-hearted. He bequeathed to me his little property, which, from the liberality of his disposition, and his expensive style of living, was indeed but small; and he most particularly recommended me, in dying, to the protection of a nobleman who had been his patron.

The latter was a man who passed for munificent. He was a lover and an encourager of the arts, and evidently wished to be thought so. He fancied he saw in me indications of future excellence: my pencil had already attracted attention; he took me at once under his protection. Seeing that I was overwhelmed with grief, and incapable of exerting myself in the mansion of my late benefactor, he invited me to sojourn for a time at a villa which he possessed on the border of the sea, in the picturesque neighbourhood of Sestri de Ponente.

I found at the villa the count's only son, Filippo; he was nearly of my age; prepossessing in his appearance, and fascinating in his manners; he attached himself to me, and seemed to

court my good opinion. I thought there was something of profession in his kindness, and of caprice in his disposition; but I had nothing else near me to attach myself to, and my heart felt the need of something to repose upon. His education had been neglected; he looked upon me as his superior in mental powers and acquirements, and tacitly acknowledged my superiority. I felt that I was his equal in birth, and that gave independence to my manners, which had its effect. The caprice and tyranny I saw sometimes exercised on others over whom he had power were never manifested towards me. We became intimate friends and frequent companions. Still I loved to be alone, and to indulge in the reveries of my own imagination among the scenery by which I was surrounded.

The villa commanded a wide view of the Mediterranean, and of the picturesque Ligurian coast. It stood alone in the midst of ornamented grounds, finely decorated with statues and fountains, and laid out into groves and alleys, and shady lawns. Every thing was assembled here

that could gratify the taste, or agreeably occupy the mind. Soothed by the tranquillity of this elegant retreat, the turbulence of my feelings gradually subsided, and blending with the romantic spell which still reigned over my imagination, produced a soft, voluptuous melancholy.

I had not been long under the roof of the Count when our solitude was enlivened by another inhabitant. It was the daughter of a relative of the Count, who had lately died in reduced circumstances, bequeathing this only child to his protection. I had heard much of her beauty from Filippo, but my fancy had become so engrossed by one idea of beauty, as not to admit of any other. We were in the central saloon of the villa when she arrived. She was still in mourning, and approached, leaning on the Count's arm. As they ascended the marble portico I was struck by the elegance of her figure and movement, by the grace with which the *mezzaro*, the bewitching veil of Genoa, was folded about her slender form. They entered.

Heavens! what was my surprise when I beheld Bianca before me. It was herself; pale with grief, but still more matured in loveliness than when I had last beheld her. The time that had elapsed had developed the graces of her person, and the sorrow she had undergone had diffused over her countenance an irresistible tenderness.

She blushed and trembled at seeing me, and tears rushed into her eyes, for she remembered in whose company she had been accustomed to behold me. For my part, I cannot express what were my emotions. By degrees I overcame the extreme shyness that had formerly paralysed me in her presence. We were drawn together by sympathy of situation. We had each lost our best friend in the world; we were each, in some measure, thrown upon the kindness of others. When I came to know her intellectually, all my ideal picturings of her were confirmed. Her newness to the world, her delightful susceptibility to every thing beautiful and agreeable in nature, reminded me of my own emotions when first I escaped from the convent: her rectitude

of thinking delighted my judgment; the sweetness of her nature wrapped itself round my heart, and then her young, and tender, and budding loveliness sent a delicious madness to my brain.

I gazed upon her with a kind of idolatry, as something more than mortal; and I felt humiliated at the idea of my comparative unworthiness. Yet she was mortal; and one of mortality's most susceptible and loving compounds; for she loved me!

How first I discovered the transporting truth I cannot recollect; I believe it stole upon me by degrees as a wonder past hope or belief. We were both at such a tender and loving age; in constant intercourse with each other; mingling in the same elegant pursuits—for music, poetry, and painting, were our mutual delights; and we were almost separated from society among lovely and romantic scenery. Is it strange that two young hearts, thus brought together, should readily twine round each other?

O gods! what a dream—a transient dream

of unalloyed delight, then passed over my soul! Then it was that the world around me was indeed a paradise; for I had woman—lovely, delicious woman, to share it with me! How often have I rambled along the picturesque shores of Sestri, or climbed its wild mountains, with the coast gemmed with villas and the blue sea far below me, and the slender Faro of Genoa on its romantic promontory in the distance; and as I sustained the faltering steps of Bianca, have thought there could no unhappiness enter into so beautiful a world! How often have we listened together to the nightingale, as it poured forth its rich notes among the moonlight bowers of the garden, and have wondered that poets could ever have fancied any thing melancholy in its song! Why, oh why is this budding season of life and tenderness so transient! why is this rosy cloud of love, that sheds such a glow over the morning of our days, so prone to brew up into the whirlwind and the storm!

I was the first to awaken from this blissful delirium of the affections. I had gained Bianca's

heart, what was I to do with it? I had no wealth nor prospect to entitle me to her hand; was I to take advantage of her ignorance of the world, of her confiding affection, and draw her down to my own poverty? Was this requiting the hospitality of the Count? was this requiting the love of Bianca?

Now first I began to feel that even successful love may have its bitterness. A corroding care gathered about my heart. I moved about the palace like a guilty being. I felt as if I had abused its hospitality, as if I were a thief within its walls. I could no longer look with unembarrassed mien in the countenance of the Count. I accused myself of perfidy to him, and I thought he read it in my looks, and began to distrust and despise me. His manner had always been ostentatious and condescending; it now appeared cold and haughty. Filippo, too, became reserved and distant; or at least I suspected him to be so. Heavens! was this mere coinage of my brain? Was I to become suspicious of all the world? A poor, surmising wretch; watch-

ing looks and gestures; and torturing myself with misconstructions? Or if true, was I to remain beneath a roof where I was merely tolerated, and linger there on suffrance? "This is not to be endured!" exclaimed I: "I will tear myself from this state of self-abasement—I will break through this fascination, and fly —— Fly!—Whither?——from the world? for where is the world when I leave Bianca behind me?"

My spirit was naturally proud, and swelled within me at the idea of being looked upon with contumely. Many times I was on the point of declaring my family and rank, and asserting my equality in the presence of Bianca, when I thought her relations assumed an air of superiority. But the feeling was transient. I considered myself discarded and contemned by my family; and had solemnly vowed never to own relationship to them until they themselves should claim it.

The struggle of my mind preyed upon my happiness and my health. It seemed as if the uncertainty of being loved would be less into-

lerable than thus to be assured of it, and yet not dare to enjoy the conviction. I was no longer the enraptured admirer of Bianca; I no longer hung in ecstasy on the tones of her voice, nor drank in with insatiate gaze the beauty of her countenance. Her very smiles ceased to delight me, for I felt culpable in having won them.

She could not but be sensible of the change in me, and inquired the cause with her usual frankness and simplicity. I could not evade the inquiry, for my heart was full to aching. I told her all the conflict of my soul; my devouring passion, my bitter self-upbraiding. "Yes," said I, "I am unworthy of you. I am an offcast from my family—a wanderer—a nameless, homeless wanderer—with nothing but poverty for my portion; and yet I have dared to love you—have dared to aspire to your love!"

My agitation moved her to tears, but she saw nothing in my situation so hopeless as I had depicted it. Brought up in a convent, she knew nothing of the world—its wants—its cares: and indeed what woman is a worldly casuist in

matters of the heart? Nay more—she kindled into a sweet enthusiasm when she spoke of my fortunes and myself. We had dwelt together on the works of the famous masters: I had related to her their histories; the high reputation, the influence, the magnificence to which they had attained. The companions of princes, the favourites of kings, the pride and boast of nations. All this she applied to me. Her love saw nothing in all their great productions that I was not able to achieve, and when I beheld the lovely creature glow with fervour, and her whole countenance radiant with visions of my glory, I was snatched up for the moment into the heaven of her own imagination.

I am dwelling too long upon this part of my story; yet I cannot help lingering over a period of my life, on which, with all its cares and conflicts, I look back with fondness, for as yet my soul was unstained by a crime. I do not know what might have been the result of this struggle between pride, delicacy, and passion, had I not

read in a Neapolitan gazette, an account of the sudden death of my brother. It was accompanied by an earnest inquiry for intelligence concerning me, and a prayer, should this meet my eye, that I would hasten to Naples to comfort an infirm and afflicted father.

I was naturally of an affectionate disposition, but my brother had never been as a brother to me. I had long considered myself as disconnected from him, and his death caused me but little emotion. The thoughts of my father, infirm and suffering, touched me however to the quick, and when I thought of him, that lofty, magnificent being, now bowed down and desolate, and suing to me for comfort, all my resentment for past neglect was subdued, and a glow of filial affection was awakened within me.

The predominant feeling, however, that overpowered all others, was transport at the sudden change in my whole fortunes. A home, a name, rank, wealth awaited me; and love painted a still more rapturous prospect in the distance. I hastened to Bianca, and threw myself at her

feet. "Oh, Bianca!" exclaimed I, "at length I can claim you for my own. I am no longer a nameless adventurer, a neglected, rejected outcast. Look—read—behold the tidings that restore me to my name and to myself!"

I will not dwell on the scene that ensued. Bianca rejoiced in the reverse of my situation, because she saw it lightened my heart of a load of care; for her own part, she had loved me for myself, and had never doubted that my own merits would command both fame and fortune.

I now felt all my native pride buoyant within me. I no longer walked with my eyes bent to the dust; hope elevated them to the skies—my soul was lit up with fresh fires, and beamed from my countenance.

I wished to impart the change in my circumstances to the count; to let him know who and what I was—and to make formal proposals for the hand of Bianca; but he was absent on a distant estate. I opened my whole soul to Filippo. Now, first, I told him of my passion, of the doubts and fears that had distracted me, and of the tidings that had suddenly dispelled

them. He overwelmed me with congratulations, and with the warmest expressions of sympathy. I embraced him in the fulness of my heart; —I felt compunctious for having suspected him of coldness, and asked him forgiveness for having ever doubted his friendship.

Nothing is so warm and enthusiastic as a sudden expansion of the heart between young men. Filippo entered into our concerns with the most eager interest. He was our confidant and counsellor. It was determined that I should hasten at once to Naples, to re-establish myself in my father's affections, and my paternal home; and the moment the reconciliation was effected, and my father's consent insured, I should return and demand Bianca of the count. Filippo engaged to secure his father's acquiescence; indeed he undertook to watch over our interests, and to be the channel through which we might correspond.

My parting with Bianca was tender—delicious—agonizing. It was in a little pavilion of the garden which had been one of our favourite resorts. How often and often did I return to

have one more adieu, to have her look once more on me in speechless emotion; to enjoy once more the rapturous sight of those tears streaming down her lovely cheeks; to seize once more on that delicate hand, the frankly accorded pledge of love, and cover it with tears and kisses! Heavens! There is a delight even in the parting agony of two lovers, worth a thousand tame pleasures of the world. I have her at this moment before my eyes, at the window of the pavilion, putting aside the vines that clustered about the casement, her light form beaming forth in virgin light, her countenance all tears and smiles, sending a thousand and a thousand adieus after me, as, hesitating, in a delirium of fondness and agitation, I faltered my way down the avenue.

As the bark bore me out of the harbour of Genoa, how eagerly my eye stretched along the coast of Sestri till it discovered the villa gleaming from among trees at the foot of the mountain. As long as day lasted, I gazed and gazed upon it till it lessened and lessened to a mere

white speck in the distance; and still my intense and fixed gaze discerned it, when all other objects of the coast had blended into indistinct confusion, or were lost in the evening gloom.

On arriving at Naples, I hastened to my paternal home. My heart yearned for the long-withheld blessing of a father's love.—As I entered the proud portal of the ancestral palace, my emotions were so great, that I could not speak. No one knew me; the servants gazed at me with curiosity and surprise. A few years of intellectual elevation and developement had made a prodigious change in the poor fugitive stripling from the convent. Still that no one should know me in my rightful home was overpowering. I felt like the prodigal son returned. I was a stranger in the house of my father. I burst into tears and wept aloud. When I made myself known, however, all was changed. I, who had once been almost repulsed from its walls, and forced to fly as an exile, was welcomed back with acclamation, with servility. One of the servants hastened to prepare my father for

my reception; my eagerness to receive the paternal embrace was so great, that I could not await his return, but hurried after him. What a spectacle met my eyes as I entered the chamber! My father, whom I had left in the pride of vigorous age, whose noble and majestic bearing had so awed my young imagination, was bowed down and withered into decrepitude. A paralysis had ravaged his stately form, and left it a shaking ruin. He sat propped up in his chair, with pale relaxed visage, and glassy wandering eye. His intellects had evidently shared in the ravage of his frame. The servant was endeavouring to make him comprehend that a visitor was at hand. I tottered up to him, and sunk at his feet. All his past coldness and neglect were forgotten in his present sufferings. I remembered only that he was my parent, and that I had deserted him. I clasped his knees: my voice was almost stifled with convulsive sobs. "Pardon—pardon, oh! my father!" was all that I could utter. His apprehension seemed slowly to return to him. He gazed at me for some mo-

ments with a vague, inquiring look; a convulsive tremor quivered about his lips; he feebly extended a shaking hand; laid it upon my head, and burst into an infantine flow of tears.

From that moment he would scarcely spare me from his sight. I appeared the only object that his heart responded to in the world; all else was as a blank to him. He had almost lost the powers of speech, and the reasoning faculty seemed at an end. He was mute and passive, excepting that fits of child-like weeping would sometimes come over him without any immediate cause. If I left the room at any time, his eye was incessantly fixed on the door till my return, and on my entrance there was another gush of tears.

To talk with him of my concerns, in this ruined state of mind, would have been worse than useless; to have left him, for ever so short a time, would have been cruel, unnatural. Here then was a new trial for my affections. I wrote to Bianca an account of my return, and of my actual situation, painting, in colours vivid, for

they were true, the torments I suffered at our being thus separated; for to the youthful lover every day of absence is an age of love lost. I enclosed the letter in one to Filippo, who was the channel of our correspondence. I received a reply from him full of friendship and sympathy; from Bianca, full of assurances of affection and constancy. Week after week, month after month elapsed, without making any change in my circumstances. The vital flame, which had seemed nearly extinct when first I met my father, kept fluttering on without any apparent diminution. I watched him constantly, faithfully, I had almost said patiently. I knew that his death alone would set me free—yet I never at any moment wished it. I felt too glad to be able to make any atonement for past disobedience; and, denied as I had been all endearments of relationship in my early days, my heart yearned towards a father, who in his age and helplessness had thrown himself entirely on me for comfort.

My passion for Bianca gained daily more force from absence: by constant meditation it wore itself a deeper and deeper channel. I made no new friends nor acquaintances; sought none of the pleasures of Naples, which my rank and fortune threw open to me. Mine was a heart that confined itself to few objects, but dwelt upon them with the intenser passion. To sit by my father—administer to his wants, and to meditate on Bianca in the silence of his chamber, was my constant habit. Sometimes I amused myself with my pencil, in portraying the image that was ever present to my imagination. I transferred to canvas every look and smile of hers that dwelt in my heart. I showed them to my father, in hopes of awakening an interest in his bosom for the mere shadow of my love; but he was too far sunk in intellect to take any more than a child-like notice of them. When I received a letter from Bianca, it was a new source of solitary luxury. Her letters, it is true, were less and less frequent, but they were always

full of assurances of unabated affection. They breathed not the frank and innocent warmth with which she expressed herself in conversation, but I accounted for it from the embarrassment which inexperienced minds have often to express themselves upon paper. Filippo assured me of her unaltered constancy. They both lamented, in the strongest terms, our continued separation, though they did justice to the filial piety that kept me by my father's side.

Nearly two years elapsed in this protracted exile. To me they were so many ages. Ardent and impetuous by nature, I scarcely know how I should have supported so long an absence, had I not felt assured that the faith of Bianca was equal to my own. At length my father died. Life went from him almost imperceptibly. I hung over him in mute affliction, and watched the expiring spasms of nature. His last faltering accents whispered repeatedly a blessing on me.—Alas! how has it been fulfilled!

When I had paid due honours to his remains, and laid them in the tomb of our ancestors, I

arranged briefly my affairs; put them in a posture to be easily at my command from a distance, and embarked once more with a bounding heart for Genoa.

Our voyage was propitious, and oh! what was my rapture, when first, in the dawn of morning, I saw the shadowy summits of the Apennines rising almost like clouds above the horizon. The sweet breath of summer just moved us over the long wavering billows that were rolling us on towards Genoa. By degrees the coast of Sestri rose like a creation of enchantment from the silver bosom of the deep. I beheld the line of villages and palaces studding its borders. My eye reverted to a well-known point, and at length, from the confusion of distant objects, it singled out the villa which contained Bianca. It was a mere speck in the landscape, but glimmering from afar, the polar star of my heart.

Again I gazed at it for a livelong summer's day, but oh! how different the emotions between departure and return. It now kept growing and growing, instead of lessening and lessening

on my sight. My heart seemed to dilate with it. I looked at it through a telescope. I gradually defined one feature after another. The balconies of the central saloon where first I met Bianca beneath its roof; the terrace where we so often had passed the delightful summer evenings; the awning that shaded her chamber window; I almost fancied I saw her form beneath it. Could she but know her lover was in the bark whose white sail now gleamed on the sunny bosom of the sea! My fond impatience increased as we neared the coast; the ship seemed to lag lazily over the billows; I could almost have sprang into the sea, and swam to the desired shore.

The shadows of evening gradually shrouded the scene; but the moon arose in all her fulness and beauty, and shed the tender light so dear to lovers, over the romantic coast of Sestri. My soul was bathed in unutterable tenderness. I anticipated the heavenly evenings I should pass in once more wandering with Bianca by the light of that blessed moon.

It was late at night before we entered the

harbour. As early next morning as I could get released from the formalities of landing, I threw myself on horseback and hastened to the villa. As I galloped round the rocky promontory on which stands the Faro, and saw the coast of Sestri opening upon me, a thousand anxieties and doubts suddenly sprang up in my bosom. There is something fearful in returning to those we love, while yet uncertain what ills or changes absence may have effected. The turbulence of my agitation shook my very frame. I spurred my horse to redoubled speed; he was covered with foam when we both arrived panting at the gateway that opened to the grounds around the villa. I left my horse at a cottage, and walked through the grounds, that I might regain tranquillity for the approaching interview. I chid myself for having suffered mere doubts and surmises thus suddenly to overcome me; but I was always prone to be carried away by gusts of the feelings.

On entering the garden every thing bore the same look as when I had left it; and this un-

changed aspect of things reassured me. There were the alleys in which I had so often walked with Bianca, as we listened to the song of the nightingale; the same shades under which we had so often sat during the noontide heat. There were the same flowers of which she was fond; and which appeared still to be under the ministry of her hand. Every thing looked and breathed of Bianca; hope and joy flushed in my bosom at every step. I passed a little arbour, in which we had often sat and read together—a book and a glove lay on the bench—It was Bianca's glove; it was a volume of the Metastasio I had given her. The glove lay in my favourite passage. I clasped them to my heart with rapture. "All is safe!" exclaimed I; "she loves me, she is still my own!"

I bounded lightly along the avenue down which I had faltered so slowly at my departure. I beheld her favourite pavilion, which had witnessed our parting scene. The window was open, with the same vine clambering about it, precisely as when she waved and wept me an

adieu. O how transporting was the contrast in my situation! As I passed near the pavilion, I heard the tones of a female voice: they thrilled through me with an appeal to my heart not to be mistaken. Before I could think, I *felt*, they were Bianca's. For an instant I paused, overpowered with agitation. I feared to break so suddenly upon her. I softly ascended the steps of the pavilion. The door was open. I saw Bianca seated at a table; her back was towards me; she was warbling a soft, melancholy air, and was occupied in drawing. A glance sufficed to show me that she was copying one of my own paintings. I gazed on her for a moment in a delicious tumult of emotions. She paused in her singing: a heavy sigh, almost a sob, followed. I could no longer contain myself. "Bianca!" exclaimed I, in a half-smothered voice. She started at the sound, brushed back the ringlets that hung clustering about her face, darted a glance at me, uttered a piercing shriek, and would have fallen to the earth, had I not caught her in my arms.

"Bianca! my own Bianca!" exclaimed I, folding her to my bosom; my voice stifled in sobs of convulsive joy. She lay in my arms without sense or motion. Alarmed at the effects of my precipitation, I scarce knew what to do. I tried by a thousand endearing words to call her back to consciousness. She slowly recovered, and half-opening her eyes, "Where am I?" murmured she, faintly. "Here!" exclaimed I, pressing her to my bosom, "Here—close to the heart that adores you—in the arms of your faithful Ottavio!" "Oh no! no! no!" shrieked she, starting into sudden life and terror—"away! away! leave me! leave me!"

She tore herself from my arms; rushed to a corner of the saloon, and covered her face with her hands, as if the very sight of me were baleful. I was thunderstruck. I could not believe my senses. I followed her, trembling, confounded. I endeavoured to take her hand; but she shrunk from my very touch with horror.

"Good heavens, Bianca!" exclaimed I, "what is the meaning of this? Is this my reception

after so long an absence? Is this the love you professed for me?"

At the mention of love a shuddering ran through her. She turned to me a face wild with anguish: "No more of that—no more of that!" gasped she: "talk not to me of love—I—I—am married!"

I reeled as if I had received a mortal blow—a sickness struck to my very heart. I caught at a window-frame for support. For a moment or two every thing was chaos around me. When I recovered I beheld Bianca lying on a sofa, her face buried in the pillow, and sobbing convulsively. Indignation for her fickleness for a moment overpowered every other feeling.

"Faithless—perjured!" cried I, striding across the room. But another glance at that beautiful being in distress checked all my wrath. Anger could not dwell together with her idea in my soul.

"Oh! Bianca," exclaimed I, in anguish, "could I have dreamt of this? Could I have suspected you would have been false to me?"

She raised her face all streaming with tears, all disordered with emotion, and gave me one appealing look. "False to you!——They told me you were dead!"

"What," said I, "in spite of our constant correspondence?"

She gazed wildly at me: "Correspondence! what correspondence?"

"Have you not repeatedly received and replied to my letters?"

She clasped her hands with solemnity and fervour. "As I hope for mercy—never!"

A horrible surmise shot through my brain. "Who told you I was dead?"

"It was reported that the ship in which you embarked for Naples perished at sea."

"But who told you the report?"

She paused for an instant and trembled:—"Filippo!"

"May the God of heaven curse him!" cried I, extending my clenched fists aloft.

"O do not curse him, do not curse him!" exclaimed she: "he is—he is—my husband!"

This was all that was wanting to unfold the perfidy that had been practised upon me. My blood boiled like liquid fire in my veins. I gasped with rage too great for utterance—I remained for a time bewildered by the whirl of horrible thoughts that rushed through my mind. The poor victim of deception before me thought it was with her I was incensed. She faintly murmured forth her exculpation. I will not dwell upon it. I saw in it more than she meant to reveal. I saw with a glance how both of us had been betrayed.

" 'Tis well," muttered I to myself in smothered accents of concentrated fury. " He shall render an account of all this."

Bianca overheard me. New terror flashed in her countenance. " For mercy's sake, do not meet him!—Say nothing of what has passed—for my sake say nothing to him---I only shall be the sufferer!"

A new suspicion darted across my mind—" What!" exclaimed I, " do you then *fear* him? is he *unkind* to you? Tell me," reiterated I,

grasping her hand, and looking her eagerly in the face, " tell me—*dares* he to use you harshly ?"

" No ! no ! no !" cried she, faltering and embarrassed—but the glance at her face had told me volumes. I saw in her pallid and wasted features, in the prompt terror and subdued agony of her eye, a whole history of a mind broken down by tyranny. Great God ! and was this beauteous flower snatched from me to be thus trampled upon ? The idea roused me to madness. I clenched my teeth and my hands ; I foamed at the mouth ; every passion seemed to have resolved itself into the fury that like a lava boiled within my heart. Bianca shrunk from me in speechless affright. As I strode by the window my eye darted down the alley. Fatal moment ! I beheld Filippo at a distance ! my brain was in delirium—I sprang from the pavilion, and was before him with the quickness of lightning. He saw me as I came rushing upon him—he turned pale, looked wildly to

right and left as if he would have fled, and trembling drew his sword.

"Wretch!" cried I, "well may you draw your weapon!"

I spake not another word—I snatched forth a stiletto, put by the sword which trembled in his hand, and buried my poniard in his bosom. He fell with the blow, but my rage was unsated. I sprung upon him with the blood-thirsty feeling of a tiger; redoubled my blows; mangled him in my frenzy, grasped him by the throat, until with reiterated wounds and strangling convulsions he expired in my grasp. I remained glaring on the countenance, horrible in death, that seemed to stare back with its protruded eyes upon me. Piercing shrieks roused me from my delirium. I looked round, and beheld Bianca flying distractedly towards us. My brain whirled—I waited not to meet her; but fled from the scene of horror. I fled forth from the garden like another Cain,—a hell within my bosom, and a curse upon my head. I fled

without knowing whither, almost without knowing why. My only idea was to get farther and farther from the horrors I had left behind; as if I could throw space between myself and my conscience. I fled to the Apennines, and wandered for days and days among their savage heights. How I existed, I cannot tell—what rocks and precipices I braved, and how I braved them, I know not. I kept on and on, trying to out-travel the curse that clung to me. Alas! the shrieks of Bianca rung for ever in my ears. The horrible countenance of my victim was for ever before my eyes. The blood of Filippo cried to me from the ground. Rocks, trees, and torrents all resounded with my crime. Then it was I felt how much more insupportable is the anguish of remorse than every other mental pang. Oh! could I but have cast off this crime that festered in my heart—could I but have regained the innocence that reigned in my breast as I entered the garden at Sestri—could I but have restored my victim to life, I felt as if

I could look on with transport, even though Bianca were in his arms.

By degrees this frenzied fever of remorse settled into a permanent malady of the mind—into one of the most horrible that ever poor wretch was cursed with. Wherever I went, the countenance of him I had slain appeared to follow me. Whenever I turned my head, I beheld it behind me, hideous with the contortions of the dying moment. I have tried in every way to escape from this horrible phantom, but in vain. I know not whether it be an illusion to the mind, the consequence of my dismal education at the convent, or whether a phantom really sent by Heaven to punish me, but there it ever is—at all times—in all places. Nor has time nor habit had any effect in familiarizing me with its terrors. I have travelled from place to place—plunged into amusements—tried dissipation and distraction of every kind—all—all in vain. I once had recourse to my pencil, as a desperate experiment. I painted an exact resemblance of

this phantom face. I placed it before me, in hopes that by constantly contemplating the copy, I might diminish the effect of the original. But I only doubled instead of diminishing the misery. Such is the curse that has clung to my footsteps—that has made my life a burthen, but the thought of death terrible. God knows what I have suffered—what days and days, and nights and nights of sleepless torment—what a never-dying worm has preyed upon my heart—what an unquenchable fire has burned within my brain! He knows the wrongs that wrought upon my poor weak nature; that converted the tenderest of affections into the deadliest of fury. He knows best whether a frail erring creature has expiated by long-enduring torture and measureless remorse the crime of a moment of madness. Often, often have I prostrated myself in the dust, and implored that he would give me a sign of his forgiveness, and let me die.———

Thus far had I written some time since. I

had meant to leave this record of misery and crime with you, to be read when I should be no more.

My prayer to Heaven has at length been heard. You were witness to my emotions last evening at the church, when the vaulted temple resounded with the words of atonement and redemption. I heard a voice speaking to me from the midst of the music; I heard it rising above the pealing of the organ and the voices of the choir—it spoke to me in tones of celestial melody—it promised mercy and forgiveness, but demanded from me full expiation. I go to make it. To-morrow I shall be on my way to Genoa, to surrender myself to justice. You who have pitied my sufferings, who have poured the balm of sympathy into my wounds, do not shrink from my memory with abhorrence now that you know my story. Recollect, when you read of my crime I shall have atoned for it with my blood!

When the Baronet had finished, there was a universal desire expressed to see the painting of this frightful visage. After much entreaty the Baronet consented, on condition that they should only visit it one by one. He called his housekeeper, and gave her charge to conduct the gentlemen, singly, to the chamber. They all returned varying in their stories. Some affected in one way, some in another; some more, some less; but all agreeing that there was a certain something about the painting that had a very odd effect upon the feelings.

I stood in a deep bow window with the Baronet, and could not help expressing my wonder. "After all," said I, "there are certain mysteries in our nature, certain inscrutable impulses and influences, which warrant one in being superstitious. Who can account for so many persons of different characters being thus strangely affected by a mere painting?"

"And especially when not one of them has seen it!" said the Baronet, with a smile.

"How!" exclaimed I, "not seen it?"

"Not one of them!" replied he, laying his finger on his lips, in sign of secrecy. "I saw that some of them were in a bantering vein, and I did not choose that the memento of the poor Italian should be made a jest of. So I gave the housekeeper a hint to show them all to a different chamber!"

Thus end the stories of the Nervous Gentleman.

PART II.

BUCKTHORNE

AND HIS

FRIENDS.

This world is the best that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world, sir, that ever was known.

LINES FROM AN INN WINDOW.

LITERARY LIFE.

Among other objects of a traveller's curiosity, I had at one time a great craving after anecdotes of literary life; and being at London, one of the most noted places for the production of books, I was excessively anxious to know something of the animals which produced them. Chance fortunately threw me in the way of a literary man by the name of Buckthorne, an eccentric personage, who had lived much in the metropolis, and could give me the natural history of every odd animal to be met with in that wilderness of men. He readily imparted to me some useful hints upon the subject of my inquiry.

"The literary world," said he, "is made up of little confederacies, each looking upon its own members as the lights of the universe; and con-

sidering all others as mere transient meteors, doomed soon to fall and be forgotten, while its own luminaries are to shine steadily on to immortality."

"And pray," said I, "how is a man to get a peep into those confederacies you speak of? I presume an intercourse with authors is a kind of intellectual exchange, where one must bring his commodities to barter, and always give a *quid pro quo.*"

"Pooh, pooh! how you mistake," said Buckthorne, smiling; "you must never think to become popular among wits by shining. They go into society to shine themselves, not to admire the brilliancy of others. I once thought as you do, and never went into literary society without studying my part beforehand; the consequence was, I soon got the name of an intolerable proser, and should, in a little while, have been completely excommunicated, had I not changed my plan of operations. No, sir, there is no character that succeeds so well among wits as that of a good listener; or if ever you are eloquent,

let it be when tête-à-tête with an author, and then in praise of his own works, or, what is nearly as acceptable, in disparagement of the works of his contemporaries. If ever he speaks favourably of the productions of a particular friend, dissent boldly from him; pronounce his friend to be a blockhead; never fear his being vexed; much as people speak of the irritability of authors, I never found one to take offence at such contradictions. No, no, sir, authors are particularly candid in admitting the faults of their friends.

"Indeed I would advise you to be extremely sparing of remarks on all modern works, excepting to make sarcastic observations on the most distinguished writers of the day."

"Faith," said I, "I'll praise none that have not been dead for at least half a century."

"Even then," observed Mr. Buckthorne, "I would advise you to be rather cautious; for you must know that many old writers have been enlisted under the banners of different sects, and their merits have become as completely topics

of party discussion as the merits of living statesmen and politicians. Nay, there have been whole periods of literature absolutely taboo'd, to use a South Sea phrase. It is, for example, as much as a man's critical reputation is worth, in some circles, to say a word in praise of any of the writers of the reign of Charles the Second, or even of Queen Anne, they being all declared Frenchmen in disguise."

"And pray," said I, "when am I then to know that I am on safe grounds, being totally unacquainted with the literary landmarks, and the boundary-line of fashionable taste?"

"Oh!" replied he, "there is fortunately one tract of literature which forms a kind of neutral ground, on which all the literary meet amicably, and run riot in the excess of their good humour, and this is the reigns of Elizabeth and James; here you may praise away at random. Here it is "cut and come again;" and the more obscure the author, and the more quaint and crabbed his style, the more your admiration will smack of the real relish of the connois-

seur, whose taste, like that of an epicure, is always for game that has an antiquated flavour.

"But," continued he, "as you seem anxious to know something of literary society, I will take an opportunity to introduce you to some coterie, where the talents of the day are assembled. I cannot promise you, however, that they will all be of the first order. Somehow or other, our great geniuses are not gregarious; they do not go in flocks, but fly singly in general society. They prefer mingling, like common men, with the multitude, and are apt to carry nothing of the author about them but the reputation. It is only the inferior orders that herd together, acquire strength and importance by their confederacies, and bear all the distinctive characteristics of their species."

A LITERARY DINNER.

A FEW days after this conversation with Mr. Buckthorne, he called upon me, and took me with him to a regular literary dinner. It was given by a great bookseller, or rather a company of booksellers, whose firm surpassed in length that of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego.

I was surprised to find between twenty and thirty guests assembled, most of whom I had never seen before. Mr. Buckthorne explained this to me by informing me that this was a business dinner, or kind of field-day, which the house gave about twice a year to its authors. It is true they did occasionally give snug dinners to three or four literary men at a time; but then these were generally select authors, favourites of the public, such as had arrived at their sixth or seventh editions. "There are,"

said he, "certain geographical boundaries in the land of literature, and you may judge tolerably well of an author's popularity by the wine his bookseller gives him. An author crosses the port line about the third edition, and gets into claret; and when he has reached the sixth or seventh, he may revel in champagne and burgundy."

"And pray," said I, "how far may these gentlemen have reached that I see around me; are any of these claret drinkers?"

"Not exactly, not exactly. You find at these great dinners the common steady run of authors, one, two edition men; or if any others are invited, they are aware that it is a kind of republican meeting.—You understand me—a meeting of the republic of letters; and that they must expect nothing but plain, substantial fare."

These hints enabled me to comprehend more fully the arrangement of the table. The two ends were occupied by two partners of the house; and the host seemed to have adopted Addison's idea as to the literary precedence of his guests.

A popular poet had the post of honour; opposite to whom was a hot-pressed traveller in quarto with plates. A grave-looking antiquarian, who had produced several solid works, that were much quoted and little read, was treated with great respect, and seated next to a neat dressy gentleman in black, who had written a thin, genteel, hot-pressed octavo on political economy, that was getting into fashion. Several three volume duodecimo men, of fair currency, were placed about the centre of the table; while the lower end was taken up with small poets, translators, and authors who had not as yet risen into much notoriety.

The conversation during dinner was by fits and starts; breaking out here and there in various parts of the table in small flashes, and ending in smoke. The poet who had the confidence of a man on good terms with the world, and independent of his bookseller, was very gay and brilliant, and said many clever things which set the partner next him in a roar, and delighted all the company. The other partner, however,

maintained his sedateness, and kept carving on, with the air of a thorough man of business, intent upon the occupation of the moment. His gravity was explained to me by my friend Buckthorne. He informed me that the concerns of the house were admirably distributed among the partners. "Thus, for instance," said he, "the grave gentleman is the carving partner, who attends to the joints; and the other is the laughing partner, who attends to the jokes."

The general conversation was chiefly carried on at the upper end of the table, as the authors there seemed to possess the greatest courage of the tongue. As to the crew at the lower end, if they did not make much figure in talking, they did in eating. Never was there a more determined, inveterate, thoroughly sustained attack on the trencher than by this phalanx of masticators. When the cloth was removed, and the wine began to circulate, they grew very merry and jocose among themselves. Their jokes, however, if by chance any of them reached the upper end of the table, seldom produced

much effect. Even the laughing partner did not seem to think it necessary to honour them with a smile; which my neighbour Buckthorne accounted for, by informing me that there was a certain degree of popularity to be obtained before a bookseller could afford to laugh at an author's jokes.

Among this crew of questionable gentlemen thus seated below the salt, my eye singled out one in particular. He was rather shabbily dressed; though he had evidently made the most of a rusty black coat, and wore his shirt frill plaited and puffed out voluminously at the bosom. His face was dusky, but florid, perhaps a little too florid, particularly about the nose; though the rosy hue gave the greater lustre to a twinkling black eye. He had a little the look of a boon companion, with that dash of the poor devil in it which gives an inexpressibly mellow tone to a man's humour. I had seldom seen a face of richer promise; but never was promise so ill kept. He said nothing, ate and drank with the keen appetite of a garreteer,

and scarcely stopped to laugh, even at the good jokes from the upper end of the table. I inquired who he was. Buckthorne looked at him attentively: "Gad, said he, "I have seen that face before, but where I cannot recollect. He cannot be an author of any note. I suppose some writer of sermons, or grinder of foreign travels."

After dinner we retired to another room to take tea and coffee, where we were reinforced by a cloud of inferior guests,—authors of small volumes in boards, and pamphlets stitched in blue paper. These had not as yet arrived to the importance of a dinner invitation, but were invited occasionally to pass the evening "in a friendly way." They were very respectful to the partners, and, indeed, seemed to stand a little in awe of them; but they paid devoted court to the lady of the house, and were extravagantly fond of the children. Some few, who did not feel confidence enough to make such advances, stood shyly off in corners, talking to one another; or turned over the portfolios of

prints, which they had not seen above five thousand times, or moused over the music on the forte-piano.

The poet and the thin octavo gentleman were the persons most current and at their ease in the drawing-room; being men evidently of circulation in the west end. They got on each side of the lady of the house, and paid her a thousand compliments and civilities, at some of which I thought she would have expired with delight. Every thing they said and did had the odour of fashionable life. I looked round in vain for the poor devil author in the rusty black coat; he had disappeared immediately after leaving the table, having a dread, no doubt, of the glaring light of a drawing-room. Finding nothing further to interest my attention, I took my departure soon after coffee had been served, leaving the poet, and the thin, genteel, hot-pressed, octavo gentleman, masters of the field.

THE CLUB OF QUEER FELLOWS.

I THINK it was the very next evening that, in coming out of Covent Garden Theatre with my eccentric friend Buckthorne, he proposed to give me another peep at life and character. Finding me willing for any research of the kind, he took me through a variety of the narrow courts and lanes about Covent Garden until we stopped before a tavern from which we heard the bursts of merriment of a jovial party. There would be a loud peal of laughter, then an interval, then another peal, as if a prime wag were telling a story. After a little while there was a song, and at the close of each stanza a hearty roar, and a vehement thumping on the table.

"This is the place," whispered Buckthorne;

"it is the club of queer fellows, a great resort of the small wits, third-rate actors, and newspaper critics of the theatres. Any one can go in on paying a sixpence at the bar for the use of the club."

We entered, therefore, without ceremony, and took our seats at a lone table in a dusky corner of the room. The club was assembled round a table, on which stood beverages of various kinds, according to the tastes of the individuals. The members were a set of queer fellows indeed; but what was my surprise on recognizing in the prime wit of the meeting the poor devil author whom I had remarked at the bookseller's dinner for his promising face and his complete taciturnity. Matters, however, were entirely changed with him. There he was a mere cipher; here he was lord of the ascendant, the choice spirit, the dominant genius. He sat at the head of the table with his hat on, and an eye beaming even more luminously than his nose. He had a quip and a fillip for every one, and a good thing on every occasion. Nothing could be said or

done without eliciting a spark from him; and I solemnly declare I have heard much worse wit even from noblemen. His jokes, it must be confessed, were rather wet, but they suited the circle over which he presided. The company were in that maudlin mood, when a little wit goes a great way. Every time he opened his lips there was sure to be a roar; and even sometimes before he had time to speak.

We were fortunate enough to enter in time for a glee composed by him expressly for the club, and which he sang with two boon companions who would have been worthy subjects for Hogarth's pencil. As they were each provided with a written copy, I was enabled to procure the reading of it:

Merrily, merrily push round the glass,
And merrily troll the glee,
For he who won't drink till he wink is an ass,
So, neighbour, I drink to thee.

Merrily, merrily fuddle thy nose,
Until it right rosy shall be;
For a jolly red nose, I speak under the rose,
Is a sign of good company.

We waited until the party broke up, and no one but the wit remained. He sat at the table with his legs stretched under it, and wide apart; his hands in his breeches pockets; his head drooped upon his breast; and gazing, with lack-lustre countenance, on an empty tankard. His gaiety was gone, his fire completely quenched.

My companion approached, and startled him from his fit of brown study, introducing himself on the strength of their having dined together at the booksellers.

"By the way," said he, "it seems to me I have seen you before; your face is surely that of an old acquaintance, though for the life of me I cannot tell where I have known you."

"Very likely," replied he with a smile; "many of my old friends have forgotten me. Though, to tell the truth, my memory in this instance is as bad as your own. If, however, it will assist your recollection in any way, my name is Thomas Dribble, at your service."

"What! Tom Dribble, who was at old Birchell's school in Warwickshire?"

"The same," said the other coolly.

"Why, then, we are old schoolmates, though it's no wonder you don't recollect me. I was your junior by several years; don't you recollect little Jack Buckthorne?"

Here there ensued a scene of school-fellow recognition, and a world of talk about old school times and school pranks. Mr. Dribble ended by observing, with a heavy sigh, "that times were sadly changed since those days."

"Faith, Mr. Dribble," said I, "you seem quite a different man here from what you were at dinner. I had no idea that you had so much stuff in you. There you were all silence, but here you absolutely keep the table in a roar."

"Ah! my dear sir," replied he, with a shake of the head and a shrug of the shoulder, "I'm a mere glowworm. I never shine by daylight. Besides, it's a hard thing for a poor devil of an author to shine at the table of a rich bookseller. Who do you think would laugh at any thing I could say, when I had some of the current wits of the day about me? But here, though a poor

devil, I am among still poorer devils than myself; men who look up to me as a man of letters, and a bel-esprit, and all my jokes pass as sterling gold from the mint."

"You surely do yourself injustice, sir," said I; "I have certainly heard more good things from you this evening than from any of those beaux-esprits by whom you appear to have been so daunted."

"Ah, sir! but they have luck on their side: they are in the fashion—there's nothing like being in fashion. A man that has once got his character up for a wit is always sure of a laugh, say what he may. He may utter as much nonsense as he pleases, and all will pass current. No one stops to question the coin of a rich man; but a poor devil cannot pass off either a joke or a guinea without its being examined on both sides. Wit and coin are always doubted with a thread-bare coat."

"For my part," continued he, giving his hat a twitch a little more on one side, "for my part I hate your fine dinners; there's nothing, sir,

like the freedom of a chop-house. I'd rather, any time, have my steak and tankard among my own set, than drink claret and eat venison with your cursed civil, elegant company, who never laugh at a good joke from a poor devil for fear of its being vulgar. A good joke grows in a wet soil; it flourishes in low places, but withers on your d—d high, dry grounds. I once kept high company, sir, until I nearly ruined myself, I grew so dull, and vapid, and genteel. Nothing saved me but being arrested by my landlady, and thrown into prison; where a course of catch clubs, eight-penny ale, and poor devil company, manured my mind, and brought it back to itself again."

As it was now growing late, we parted for the evening, though I felt anxious to know more of this practical philosopher. I was glad, therefore, when Buckthorne proposed to have another meeting, to talk over old school-times,—and inquired his schoolmate's address. The latter seemed at first a little shy of naming his lodgings; but suddenly assuming an air of hardi-

hood — "Green-arbour-court, sir," exclaimed he—"Number—in Green-arbour-court. You must know the place. Classic ground, sir, classic ground! It was there Goldsmith wrote his Vicar of Wakefield.—I always like to live in literary haunts."

I was amused with this whimsical apology for shabby quarters. On our way homewards Buckthorne assured me that this Dribble had been the prime wit and great wag of the school in their boyish days, and one of those unlucky urchins denominated bright geniuses. As he perceived me curious respecting his old schoolmate, he promised to take me with him in his proposed visit to Green-arbour-court.

A few mornings afterwards he called upon me, and we set forth on our expedition. He led me through a variety of singular alleys, and courts, and blind passages; for he appeared to be perfectly versed in all the intricate geography of the metropolis. At length we came out upon Fleet-market, and traversing it, turned up a narrow street to the bottom of a long steep flight of

stone steps, called Break-neck stairs. These, he told me, led up to Green-arbour-court, and that down them poor Goldsmith might many a time have risked his neck. When we entered the court, I could not but smile to think in what out of the way corners genius produces her bantlings! And the Muses, those capricious dames, who, forsooth, so often refuse to visit palaces, and deny a single smile to votaries in splendid studies and gilded drawing-rooms—what holes and burrows will they frequent to lavish their favours on some ragged disciple!

This Green-arbour-court I found to be a small square, of tall and miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery that fluttered from every window. It appeared to be a region of washerwomen, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry.

Just as we entered the square, a scuffle took place between two viragos about a disputed right

to a washtub, and immediately the whole community was in a hubbub. Heads in mob-caps popped out of every window, and such a clamour of tongues ensued, that I was fain to stop my ears. Every amazon took part with one or other of the disputants, and brandished her arms, dripping with soap-suds, and fired away from her window as from the embrazure of a fortress; while the swarms of children nestled and cradled in every procreant chamber of this hive, waking with the noise, set up their shrill pipes to swell the general concert.

Poor Goldsmith! what a time must he have had of it, with his quiet disposition and nervous habits, penned up in this den of noise and vulgarity. How strange that while every sight and sound was sufficient to embitter the heart and fill it with misanthropy, his pen should be dropping the honey of Hybla. Yet it is more than probable that he drew many of his inimitable pictures of low life from the scenes which surrounded him in this abode. The circum-

stance of Mrs. Tibbs being obliged to wash her husband's two shirts in a neighbour's house, who refused to lend her washtub, may have been no sport of fancy, but a fact passing under his own eye. His landlady may have sat for the picture, and Beau Tibbs' scanty wardrobe have been a *fac simile* of his own.

It was with some difficulty that we found our way to Dribble's lodgings. They were up two pair of stairs, in a room that looked upon the court, and when we entered, he was seated on the edge of his bed, writing at a broken table. He received us, however, with a free, open, poor-devil air, that was irresistible. It is true he did at first appear slightly confused; buttoned up his waistcoat a little higher, and tucked in a stray frill of linen. But he recollected himself in an instant; gave a half-swagger, half-leer as he stepped forth to receive us; drew a three-legged stool for Mr. Buckthorne; pointed me to a lumbering old damask chair, that looked like a dethroned monarch in exile, and bade us welcome to his garret.

We soon got engaged in conversation. Buckthorne and he had much to say about early school scenes; and as nothing opens a man's heart more than recollections of the kind, we soon drew from him a brief outline of his literary career.

THE POOR-DEVIL AUTHOR.

I BEGAN life unluckily by being the wag and bright fellow at school; and I had the further misfortune of becoming the great genius of my native village. My father was a country attorney, and intended that I should succeed him in business; but I had too much genius to study, and he was too fond of my genius to force it into the traces; so I fell into bad company, and took to bad habits. Do not mistake me. I mean that I fell into the company of village literati, and village blues, and took to writing village poetry.

It was quite the fashion in the village to be literary. There was a little knot of choice spirits of us, who assembled frequently together, formed ourselves into a literary, scientific, and philosophical society, and fancied ourselves the most learned Philos in existence. Every one had a

great character assigned him, suggested by some casual habit or affectation. One heavy fellow drank an enormous quantity of tea, rolled in his arm-chair, talked sententiously, pronounced dogmatically, and was considered a second Dr. Johnson; another, who happened to be a curate, uttered coarse jokes, wrote doggerel rhymes, and was the Swift of our association. Thus we had also our Popes, and Goldsmiths, and Addisons; and a blue stocking lady, whose drawing-room we frequented, who corresponded about nothing with all the world, and wrote letters with the stiffness and formality of a printed book, was cried up as another Mrs. Montagu. I was, by common consent, the juvenile prodigy, the poetical youth, the great genius, the pride and hope of the village, through whom it was to become one day as celebrated as Stratford on Avon.

My father died, and left me his blessing and his business. His blessing brought no money into my pocket; and as to his business, it soon deserted me, for I was busy writing poetry,

and could not attend to law; and my clients, though they had great respect for my talents, had no faith in a poetical attorney.

I lost my business, therefore, spent my money, and finished my poem. It was the Pleasures of Melancholy, and was cried up to the skies by the whole circle. The Pleasures of Imagination, the Pleasures of Hope, and the Pleasures of Memory, though each had placed its author in the first rank of poets, were blank prose in comparison. Our Mrs. Montagu would cry over it from beginning to end. It was pronounced by all the members of the literary, scientific, and philosophical society, the greatest poem of the age, and all anticipated the noise it would make in the great world. There was not a doubt but the London booksellers would be mad after it, and the only fear of my friends was, that I would make a sacrifice by selling it too cheap. Every time they talked the matter over they increased the price. They reckoned up the great sums given for the poems of certain popular writers, and determined that mine was worth more than

all put together, and ought to be paid for accordingly. For my part, I was modest in my expectations, and determined that I would be satisfied with a thousand guineas. So I put my poem in my pocket, and set off for London.

My journey was joyous. My heart was light as my purse, and my head full of anticipations of fame and fortune. With what swelling pride did I cast my eyes upon old London from the heights of Highgate. I was like a general looking down upon a place he expects to conquer. The great metropolis lay stretched before me, buried under a home-made cloud of murky smoke, that wrapped it from the brightness of a sunny day, and formed for it a kind of artificial bad weather. At the outskirts of the city, away to the west, the smoke gradually decreased until all was clear and sunny, and the view stretched uninterrupted to the blue line of the Kentish hills.

My eye turned fondly to where the mighty cupola of St. Paul swelled dimly through this misty chaos, and I pictured to myself the solemn

realm of learning that lies about its base. How soon should the Pleasures of Melancholy throw this world of booksellers and printers into a bustle of business and delight! How soon should I hear my name repeated by printers' devils throughout Paternoster-row and Angel-court and Ave Maria-lane, until Amen-corner should echo back the sound!

Arrived in town, I repaired at once to the most fashionable publisher. Every new author patronises him of course. In fact, it had been determined in the village circle that he should be the fortunate man. I cannot tell you how vain-gloriously I walked the streets; my head was in the clouds. I felt the airs of heaven playing about it, and fancied it already encircled by a halo of literary glory. As I passed by the windows of bookshops, I anticipated the time when my work would be shining among the hot-pressed wonders of the day; and my face, scratched on copper, or cut on wood, figuring in fellowship with those of Scott, and Byron, and Moore.

When I applied at the publisher's house, there was something in the loftiness of my air and the dinginess of my dress that struck the clerks with reverence. They doubtless took me for some person of consequence, probably a digger of Greek roots, or a penetrator of pyramids. A proud man in a dirty shirt is always an imposing character in the world of letters: one must feel intellectually secure before he can venture to dress shabbily; none but a great genius, or a great scholar, dares to be dirty; so I was ushered at once to the sanctum sanctorum of this high priest of Minerva.

The publishing of books is a very different affair nowadays from what it was in the time of Bernard Lintot. I found the publisher a fashionably dressed man, in an elegant drawing-room, furnished with sofas and portraits of celebrated authors, and cases of splendidly bound books. He was writing letters at an elegant table. This was transacting business in style. The place seemed suited to the magnificent publications that issued from it. I rejoiced at the

choice I had made of a publisher, for I always liked to encourage men of taste and spirit.

I stepped up to the table with the lofty poetical port that I had been accustomed to maintain in our village circle; though I threw in it something of a patronising air, such as one feels when about to make a man's fortune. The publisher paused with his pen in his hand, and seemed waiting in mute suspense to know what was to be announced by so singular an apparition.

I put him at his ease in a moment, for I felt that I had but to come, see, and conquer. I made known my name, and the name of my poem; produced my precious roll of blotted manuscript; laid it on the table with an emphasis, and told him at once, to save time and come directly to the point, the price was one thousand guineas.

I had given him no time to speak, nor did he seem so inclined. He continued looking at me for a moment with an air of whimsical perplexity; scanned me from head to foot; looked

down at the manuscript, then up again at me, then pointed to a chair; and whistling softly to himself, went on writing his letter.

I sat for some time waiting his reply, supposing he was making up his mind; but he only paused occasionally to take a fresh dip of ink, to stroke his chin, or the tip of his nose, and then resumed his writing. It was evident his mind was intently occupied upon some other subject; but I had no idea that any other subject should be attended to, and my poem lie unnoticed on the table. I had supposed that every thing would make way for the Pleasures of Melancholy.

My gorge at length rose within me. I took up my manuscript, thrust it into my pocket, and walked out of the room, making some noise as I went out, to let my departure be heard. The publisher, however, was too much buried in minor concerns to notice it. I was suffered to walk down stairs without being called back. I sallied forth into the street, but no clerk was sent after me; nor did the publisher call after

me from the drawing-room window. I have been told since, that he considered me either a madman or a fool. I leave you to judge how much he was in the wrong in his opinion.

When I turned the corner my crest fell. I cooled down in my pride and my expectations, and reduced my terms with the next bookseller to whom I applied. I had no better success; nor with a third; nor with a fourth. I then desired the booksellers to make an offer themselves; but the deuce an offer would they make. They told me poetry was a mere drug; every body wrote poetry; the market was overstocked with it. And then they said, the title of my poem was not taking: that pleasures of all kinds were worn threadbare, nothing but horrors did nowadays, and even those were almost worn out. Tales of Pirates, Robbers, and Bloody Turks might answer tolerably well; but then they must come from some established, well-known name, or the public would not look at them.

At last I offered to leave my poem with a bookseller to read it and judge for himself.

"Why, really, my dear Mr.——a—a—I forget your name," said he, casting an eye at my rusty coat and shabby gaiters, "really, sir, we are so pressed with business just now, and have so many manuscripts on hand to read, that we have not time to look at any new productions; but if you can call again in a week or two, or say the middle of next month, we may be able to look over your writings, and give you an answer. Don't forget, the month after next; good morning, sir; happy to see you any time you are passing this way." So saying, he bowed me out in the civilest way imaginable. In short, sir, instead of an eager competition to secure my poem, I could not even get it read! In the mean time I was harassed by letters from my friends, wanting to know when the work was to appear; who was to be my publisher; but, above all things, warning me not to let it go too cheap.

There was but one alternative left. I determined to publish the poem myself; and to have my triumph over the booksellers, when it should

become the fashion of the day. I accordingly published the Pleasures of Melancholy, and ruined myself. Excepting the copies sent to the reviews and to my friends in the country, not one, I believe, ever left the bookseller's warehouse. The printer's bill drained my purse, and the only notice that was taken of my work was contained in the advertisements paid for by myself.

I could have borne all this, and have attributed it, as usual, to the mismanagement of the publisher; or the want of taste in the public; and could have made the usual appeal to posterity; but my village friends would not let me rest in quiet. They were picturing me to themselves feasting with the great, communing with the literary, and in the high career of fortune and renown. Every little while some one would call on me with a letter of introduction from the village circle, recommending him to my attentions, and requesting that I would make him known in society; with a hint that an introduction to a celebrated literary nobleman

would be extremely agreeable. I determined, therefore, to change my lodgings, drop my correspondence, and disappear altogether from the view of my village admirers. Besides, I was anxious to make one more poetic attempt. I was by no means disheartened by the failure of my first. My poem was evidently too didactic. The public was wise enough. It no longer read for instruction. “They want horrors, do they?” said I: “I'faith! then, they shall have enough of them.” So I looked out for some quiet, retired place, where I might be out of reach of my friends, and have leisure to cook up some delectable dish of poetical “hell-broth.”

I had some difficulty in finding a place to my mind, when chance threw me in the way of Canonbury Castle. It is an ancient brick tower, hard by “merry Islington;” the remains of a hunting-seat of Queen Elizabeth, where she took the pleasure of the country when the neighbourhood was all woodland. What gave it particular interest in my eyes was the circumstance that it had been the residence of a poet. It was here

Goldsmith resided when he wrote his Deserted Village. I was shown the very apartment. It was a relique of the original style of the castle, with paneled wainscots and Gothic windows. I was pleased with its air of antiquity, and with its having been the residence of poor Goldy.

"Goldsmith was a pretty poet," said I to myself, "a very pretty poet, though rather of the old school. He did not think and feel so strongly as is the fashion nowadays; but had he lived in these times of hot hearts and hot heads, he would no doubt have written quite differently."

In a few days I was quietly established in my new quarters; my books all arranged; my writing-desk placed by a window looking out into the fields, and I felt as snug as Robinson Crusoe when he had finished his bower. For several days I enjoyed all the novelty of change and the charms which grace new lodgings before one has found out their defects. I rambled about the fields where I fancied Goldsmith had rambled. I explored merry Islington; ate my solitary dinner at the Black Bull, which, according

to tradition, was a country seat of Sir Walter Raleigh, and would sit and sip my wine, and muse on old times, in a quaint old room where many a council had been held.

All this did very well for a few days; I was stimulated by novelty; inspired by the associations awakened in my mind by these curious haunts; and began to think I felt the spirit of composition stirring within me. But Sunday came, and with it the whole city world, swarming about Canonbury Castle. I could not open my window but I was stunned with shouts and noises from the cricket ground; the late quiet road beneath my window was alive with the tread of feet and clack of tongues; and, to complete my misery, I found that my quiet retreat was absolutely a "show house," the tower and its contents being shown to strangers at sixpence a head.

There was a perpetual tramping up stairs of citizens and their families, to look about the country from the top of the tower, and to take a peep at the city through the telescope, to try

if they could discern their own chimneys. And then, in the midst of a vein of thought, or a moment of inspiration, I was interrupted, and all my ideas put to flight, by my intolerable landlady's tapping at the door, and asking me if I would "just please to let a lady and gentleman come in, to take a look at Mr. Goldsmith's room." If you know any thing what an author's study is, and what an author is himself, you must know that there was no standing this. I put a positive interdict on my room's being exhibited; but then it was shown when I was absent, and my papers put in confusion; and on returning home one day I absolutely found a cursed tradesman and his daughters gaping over my manuscripts, and my landlady in a panic at my appearance. I tried to make out a little longer, by taking the key in my pocket; but it would not do. I overheard mine hostess one day telling some of her customers on the stairs that the room was occupied by an author, who was always in a tantrum if interrupted; and I immediately perceived, by a slight noise at the door, that they

were peeping at me through the key-hole. By the head of Apollo, but this was quite too much! With all my eagerness for fame, and my ambition of the stare of the million, I had no idea of being exhibited by retail, at sixpence a head, and that through a key-hole. So I bade adieu to Canonbury Castle, merry Islington, and the haunts of poor Goldsmith, without having advanced a single line in my labours.

My next quarters were at a small, white-washed cottage, which stands not far from Hampstead, just on the brow of a hill, looking over Chalk Farm and Camden Town, remarkable for the rival houses of Mother Red Cap and Mother Black Cap; and so across Crack-skull Common, to the distant city.

The cottage was in nowise remarkable in itself; but I regarded it with reverence, for it had been the asylum of a persecuted author. Hither poor Steele had retreated, and lain perdù, when persecuted by creditors and bailiffs—those immemorial plagues of authors and free-spirited gentlemen; and here he had written

many numbers of the Spectator. It was from hence, too, that he had despatched those little notes to his lady, so full of affection and whimsicality, in which the fond husband, the careless gentleman, and the shifting spendthrift, were so oddly blended. I thought, as I first eyed the window of his apartment, that I could sit within it, and write volumes.

No such thing! It was hay-making season, and, as ill-luck would have it, immediately opposite the cottage was a little ale-house, with the sign of the Load of Hay. Whether it was there in Steele's time, I cannot say; but it set all attempts at conception or inspiration at defiance. It was the resort of all the Irish haymakers who mow the broad fields in the neighbourhood; and of drovers and teamsters who travel that road. Here they would gather in the endless summer twilight, or by the light of the harvest moon, and sit round a table at the door; and tipple, and laugh, and quarrel, and fight, and sing drowsy songs, and daudle away

the hours, until the deep solemn notes of St. Paul's clock would warn the varlets home.

In the day-time I was still less able to write. It was broad summer. The hay-makers were at work in the fields, and the perfume of the new-mown hay brought with it the recollection of my native fields. So, instead of remaining in my room to write, I went wandering about Primrose Hill, and Hampstead Heights, and Shepherd's Fields, and all those Arcadian scenes so celebrated by London bards. I cannot tell you how many delicious hours I have passed lying on the cocks of new-mown hay, on the pleasant slopes of some of those hills, inhaling the fragrance of the fields, while the summer-fly buzzed about me, or the grasshopper leaped into my bosom; and how I have gazed with half-shut eye upon the smoky mass of London, and listened to the distant sound of its population, and pitied the poor sons of earth, toiling in its bowels, like Gnomes in the "dark gold mine."

People may say what they please about cock-

ney pastorals, but after all, there is a vast deal of rural beauty about the western vicinity of London; and any one that has looked down upon the valley of West End, with its soft bosom of green pasturage lying open to the south, and dotted with cattle; the steeple of Hampstead rising among rich groves on the brow of the hill; and the learned height of Harrow in the distance; will confess that never has he seen a more absolutely rural landscape in the vicinity of a great metropolis.

Still, however, I found myself not a whit the better off for my frequent change of lodgings; and I began to discover that in literature, as in trade, the old proverb holds good, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."

The tranquil beauty of the country played the very vengeance with me. I could not mount my fancy into the termagant vein. I could not conceive, amidst the smiling landscape, a scene of blood and murder; and the smug citizens in breeches and gaiters put all ideas of heroes and bandits out of my brain. I could think of no-

thing but dulcet subjects, "the Pleasures of Spring"—"the Pleasures of Solitude"—"the Pleasures of Tranquillity"—"the Pleasures of Sentiment"---nothing but pleasures; and I had the painful experience of "the Pleasures of Melancholy" too strongly in my recollection to be beguiled by them.

Chance at length befriended me. I had frequently, in my ramblings, loitered about Hampstead Hill, which is a kind of Parnassus of the metropolis. At such times I occasionally took my dinner at Jack Straw's Castle. It is a country inn so named: the very spot where that notorious rebel and his followers held their council of war. It is a favourite resort of citizens when rurally inclined, as it commands fine fresh air, and a good view of the city. I sat one day in the public room of this inn, ruminating over a beefsteak and a pint of port, when my imagination kindled up with ancient and heroic images. I had long wanted a theme and a hero; both suddenly broke upon my mind: I determined to write a poem on the history of

Jack Straw. I was so full of my subject, that I was fearful of being anticipated. I wondered that none of the poets of the day, in their researches after ruffian heroes, had ever thought of Jack Straw. I went to work pell-mell, blotted several sheets of paper with choice floating thoughts, and battles, and descriptions, to be ready at a moment's warning. In a few days' time I sketched out the skeleton of my poem, and nothing was wanting but to give it flesh and blood. I used to take my manuscript and stroll about Caen-wood, and read aloud; and would dine at the castle, by way of keeping up the vein of thought.

I was there one day, at rather a late hour, in the public room: there was no other company but one man, who sat enjoying his pint of port at a window, and noticing the passers by. He was dressed in a green shooting coat. His countenance was strongly marked; he had a hooked nose, a romantic eye, excepting that it had something of a squint; and altogether, as I thought, a poetical style of head. I was quite

taken with the man, for you must know I am a little of a physiognomist; I set him down at once for either a poet or a philosopher.

As I like to make new acquaintances, considering every man a volume of human nature, I soon fell into conversation with the stranger, who, I was pleased to find, was by no means difficult of access. After I had dined, I joined him at the window, and we became so sociable, that I proposed a bottle of wine together, to which he most cheerfully assented.

I was too full of my poem to keep long quiet on the subject, and began to talk about the origin of the tavern and the history of Jack Straw. I found my new acquaintance to be perfectly at home on the topic, and to jump exactly with my humour in every respect. I became elevated by the wine and the conversation. In the fulness of an author's feelings, I told him of my projected poem, and repeated some passages, and he was in raptures. He was evidently of a strong poetical turn.

"Sir," said he, filling my glass at the same

time, "our poets don't look at home. I don't see why we need go out of old England for robbers and rebels to write about. I like your Jack Straw, sir—he's a home-made hero. I like him, sir—I like him exceedingly. He's English to the backbone—damme—Give me honest Old England after all! Them's my sentiments, sir."

"I honour your sentiment," cried I, zealously; "it is exactly my own. An English ruffian is as good a ruffian for poetry as any in Italy, or Germany, or the Archipelago; but it is hard to make our poets think so."

"More shame for them!" replied the man in green. "What a plague would they have? What have we to do with their Archipelagos of Italy and Germany? Haven't we heaths and commons and highways on our little island—ay, and stout fellows to pad the hoof over them too? Stick to home, I say—them's my sentiments.—Come, sir, my service to you—I agree with you perfectly."

"Poets, in old times, had right notions on this

subject," continued I; "witness the fine old ballads about Robin Hood, Allan a'Dale, and other stanch blades of yore."

"Right, sir, right," interrupted he; "Robin Hood! he was the lad to cry stand! to a man, and never to flinch."

"Ah, sir," said I, "they had famous bands of robbers in the good old times; those were glorious poetical days. The merry crew of Sherwood forest, who led such a roving picturesque life 'under the greenwood tree.' I have often wished to visit their haunts, and tread the scenes of the exploits of Friar Tuck, and Clym of the Clough, and Sir William of Cloudeslie."

"Nay, sir," said the gentleman in green, "we have had several very pretty gangs since their day. Those gallant dogs that kept about the great heaths in the neighbourhood of London, about Bagshot, and Hounslow and Blackheath, for instance. Come, sir, my service to you. You don't drink."

"I suppose," said I, emptying my glass, "I suppose you have heard of the famous Turpin,

who was born in this very village of Hampstead, and who used to lurk with his gang in Epping Forest, about a hundred years since?"

"Have I?" cried he, "to be sure I have! A hearty old blade that. Sound as pitch. Old Turpentine! as we used to call him. A famous fine fellow, sir."

"Well, sir," continued I, "I have visited Waltham Abbey and Chingford Church merely from the stories I heard when a boy of his exploits there, and I have searched Epping Forest for the cavern where he used to conceal himself. You must know," added I, "that I am a sort of amateur of highwaymen. They were dashing, daring fellows: the best apologies that we had for the knight-errants of yore. Ah, sir! the country has been sinking gradually into tameness and common-place. We are losing the old English spirit. The bold knights of the Post have all dwindled down into lurking footpads and sneaking pickpockets; there's no such thing as a dashing, gentleman-like robbery committed nowadays on the King's highway: a man may

roll from one end of England to the other in a drowsy coach, or jingling postchaise, without any other adventure than that of being occasionally overturned, sleeping in damp sheets, or having an ill-cooked dinner. We hear no more of public coaches being stopped and robbed by a well-mounted gang of resolute fellows, with pistols in their hands, and crapes over their faces. What a pretty poetical incident was it, for example, in domestic life, for a family carriage, on its way to a country seat, to be attacked about dark; the old gentleman eased of his purse and watch, the ladies of their necklaces and earrings, by a politely spoken highwayman on a blood mare, who afterwards leaped the hedge, and galloped across the country, to the admiration of Miss Caroline, the daughter, who would write a long and romantic account of the adventure to her friend, Miss Juliana, in town.—Ah, sir! we meet with nothing of such incidents nowadays!"

"That, sir," said my companion, taking advantage of a pause, when I stopped to recover

breath, and to take a glass of wine which he had just poured out, "that, sir, craving your pardon, is not owing to any want of old English pluck. It is the effect of this cursed system of banking. People do not travel with bags of gold as they did formerly. They have post notes, and drafts on bankers. To rob a coach is like catching a crow, where you have nothing but carrion flesh and feathers for your pains. But a coach in old times, sir, was as rich as a Spanish galloon. It turned out the yellow boys bravely. And a private carriage was a cool hundred or two at least."

I cannot express how much I was delighted with the sallies of my new acquaintance. He told me that he often frequented the Castle, and would be glad to know more of me; and I promised myself many a pleasant afternoon with him, when I should read him my poem as it proceeded, and benefit by his remarks; for it was evident he had the true poetical feeling.

"Come, sir," said he, pushing the bottle. "Damme, I like you! you're a man after my

own heart. I 'm cursed slow in making new acquaintances. One must be on the reserve, you know. But when I meet with a man of your kidney, damme, my heart jumps at once to him. Them 's my sentiments, sir.—Come, sir, here 's Jack Straw's health! I presume one can drink it nowadays without treason!"

"With all my heart," said I, gaily, "and Dick Turpin's into the bargain!"

"Ah, sir," said the man in green, "those are the kind of men for poetry. The Newgate Calendar, sir! the Newgate Calendar is your only reading! There 's the place to look for bold deeds and dashing fellows."

We were so much pleased with each other, that we sat until a late hour. I insisted on paying the bill, for both my purse and my heart were full, and I agreed that he should pay the score at our next meeting. As the coaches had all gone that run between Hampstead and London, we had to return on foot. He was so delighted with the idea of my poem, that he could

talk of nothing else. He made me repeat such passages as I could remember; and though I did it in a very mangled manner, having a wretched memory, yet he was in raptures.

Every now and then he would break out with some scrap which he would misquote most terribly, but would rub his hands and exclaim, "By Jupiter, that 's fine, that 's noble! Damme, sir, if I can conceive how you hit upon such ideas!"

I must confess I did not always relish his misquotations, which sometimes made absolute nonsense of the passages; but what author stands upon trifles when he is praised?

Never had I spent a more delightful evening. I did not perceive how the time flew. I could not bear to separate, but continued walking on, arm in arm, with him, past my lodgings, through Camden-town, and across Crackskull Common, talking the whole way about my poem.

When we were half-way across the common, he interrupted me in the midst of a quotation, by telling me that this had been a famous place for footpads, and was still occasionally infested

by them ; and that a man had recently been shot there in attempting to defend himself.—" The more fool he !" cried I ; " a man is an idiot to risk life, or even limb, to save a paltry purse of money. It's quite a different case from that of a duel, where one's honour is concerned. For my part," added I, " I should never think of making resistance against one of those desperadoes."

" Say you so ?" cried my friend in green, turning suddenly upon me, and putting a pistol to my breast ; " why, then, have at you, my lad ! —come—disburse ! empty ! unsack !"

In a word, I found that the muse had played me another of her tricks, and had betrayed me into the hands of a footpad. There was no time to parley ; he made me turn my pockets inside out ; and hearing the sound of distant footsteps, he made one full swoop upon purse, watch, and all ; gave me a thwack over my unlucky pate that laid me sprawling on the ground, and scampered away with his booty.

I saw no more of my friend in green until a

year or two afterwards; when I caught a sight of his poetical countenance among a crew of scape-graces, heavily ironed, who were on the way for transportation. He recognised me at once, tipped me an impudent wink, and asked me how I came on with the history of Jack Straw's Castle.

The catastrophe at Crackskull-common put an end to my summer's campaign. I was cured of my poetical enthusiasm for rebels, robbers, and highwaymen. I was put out of conceit of my subject, and, what was worse, I was lightened of my purse, in which was almost every farthing I had in the world. So I abandoned Sir Richard Steele's cottage in despair, and crept into less celebrated, though no less poetical and airy lodgings in a garret in town.

I now determined to cultivate the society of the literary, and to enrol myself in the fraternity of authorship. It is by the constant collision of mind, thought I, that authors strike out the sparks of genius, and kindle up with glorious conceptions. Poetry is evidently a contagious

complaint: I will keep company with poets; who knows but I may catch it as others have done?

I found no difficulty in making a circle of literary acquaintances, not having the sin of success lying at my door; indeed, the failure of my poem was a kind of recommendation to their favour. It is true my new friends were not of the most brilliant names in literature; but then, if you would take their words for it, they were like the prophets of old, men of whom the world was not worthy; and who were to live in future ages, when the ephemeral favourites of the day should be forgotten.

I soon discovered, however, that the more I mingled in literary society, the less I felt capacitated to write; that poetry was not so catching as I imagined; and that in familiar life there was often nothing less poetical than a poet. Besides, I wanted the *esprit du corps* to turn these literary fellowships to any account. I could not bring myself to enlist in any particular sect: I saw something to like in them all,

but found that would never do, for that the tacit condition on which a man enters into one of these sects is, that he abuses all the rest.

I perceived that there were little knots of authors who lived with, and for, and by one another. They considered themselves the salt of the earth. They fostered and kept up a conventional vein of thinking and talking, and joking on all subjects; and they cried each other up to the skies. Each sect had its particular creed; and set up certain authors as divinities, and fell down and worshipped them; and considered every one who did not worship them, or who worshipped any other, as a heretic and an infidel.

In quoting the writers of the day, I generally found them extolling names of which I had scarcely heard, and talking slightingly of others who were the favourites of the public. If I mentioned any recent work from the pen of a first-rate author, they had not read it; they had not time to read all that was spawned from the press; he wrote too much to write well;—and

then they would break out into raptures about some Mr. Timson, or Tomson, or Jackson, whose works were neglected at the present day, but who was to be the wonder and delight of posterity. Alas! what heavy debts is this neglectful world daily accumulating on the shoulders of poor posterity!

But above all, it was edifying to hear with what contempt they would talk of the great. Ye gods! how immeasurably the great are despised by the small fry of literature! It is true, an exception was now and then made of some nobleman, with whom, perhaps, they had casually shaken hands at an election, or hob or nobbed at a public dinner, and who was pronounced a "devilish good fellow," and "no humbug;" but, in general, it was enough for a man to have a title to be the object of their sovereign disdain: you have no idea how poetically and philosophically they would talk of nobility.

For my part, this affected me but little; for though I had no bitterness against the great, and did not think the worse of a man for

having innocently been born to a title, yet I did not feel myself at present called upon to resent the indignities poured upon them by the little. But the hostility to the great writers of the day went sorely against the grain with me. I could not enter into such feuds, nor participate in such animosities. I had not become author sufficiently to hate other authors. I could still find pleasure in the novelties of the press, and could find it in my heart to praise a contemporary, even though he were successful. Indeed, I was miscellaneous in my taste, and could not confine it to any age or growth of writers. I could turn with delight from the glowing pages of Byron to the cool and polished raillery of Pope; and, after wandering among the sacred groves of Paradise Lost, I could give myself up to voluptuous abandonment in the enchanted bowers of Lalla Rookh.

"I would have my authors," said I, "as various as my wines, and, in relishing the strong and the racy, would never decry the sparkling and exhilarating. Port and sherry are excellent

stand-by's, and so is Madeira; but claret and Burgundy may be drank now and then without disparagement to one's palate; and Champagne is a beverage by no means to be despised."

Such was the tirade I uttered one day, when a little flushed with ale, at a literary club. I uttered it, too, with something of a flourish, for I thought my simile a clever one. Unluckily, my auditors were men who drank beer and hated Pope; so my figure about wines went for nothing, and my critical toleration was looked upon as downright heterodoxy. In a word, I soon became like a freethinker in religion, an outlaw from every sect, and fair game for all. Such are the melancholy consequences of not hating in literature.

I see you are growing weary, so I will be brief with the residue of my literary career. I will not detain you with a detail of my various attempts to get astride of Pegasus; of the poems I have written which were never printed, the plays I have presented which were never performed, and the tracts I have published

which were never purchased.—It seemed as if booksellers, managers, and the very public, had entered into a conspiracy to starve me. Still I could not prevail upon myself to give up the trial, nor abandon those dreams of renown in which I had indulged. How should I be able to look the literary circle of my native village in the face if I were so completely to falsify their predictions? For some time longer, therefore, I continued to write for fame, and was, of course, the most miserable dog in existence, besides being in continual risk of starvation. I accumulated loads of literary treasure on my shelves—loads which were to be treasures to posterity; but, alas! they put not a penny into my purse. What was all this wealth to my present necessities? I could not patch my elbows with an ode; nor satisfy my hunger with blank verse. "Shall a man fill his belly with the east wind?" says the proverb. He may as well do so as with poetry.

I have many a time strolled sorrowfully along,

with a sad heart and an empty stomach, about five o'clock, and looked wistfully down the areas in the west end of the town, and seen through the kitchen-windows the fires gleaming, and the joints of meat turning on the spits and dripping with gravy, and the cook-maids beating up puddings, or trussing turkeys, and felt for the moment that if I could but have the run of one of those kitchens, Apollo and the Muses might have the hungry heights of Parnassus for me. Oh, sir! talk of meditations among the tombs —they are nothing so melancholy as the meditations of a poor devil without penny in pouch, along a line of kitchen-windows towards dinner-time.

At length, when almost reduced to famine and despair, the idea all at once entered my head, that perhaps I was not so clever a fellow as the village and myself had supposed. It was the salvation of me. The moment the idea popped into my brain it brought conviction and comfort with it. I awoke as from a dream—I gave up

immortal fame to those who could live on air; took to writing for mere bread; and have ever since had a very tolerable life of it. There is no man of letters so much at his ease, sir, as he who has no character to gain or lose. I had to train myself to it a little, and to clip my wings short at first, or they would have carried me up into poetry in spite of myself. So I determined to begin by the opposite extreme, and abandoning the higher regions of the craft, I came plump down to the lowest, and turned creeper.

"Creeper! and pray what is that?" said I.

"Oh, sir, I see you are ignorant of the language of the craft: a creeper is one who furnishes the newspapers with paragraphs at so much a line; one who goes about in quest of misfortunes; attends the Bow-street Office; the Courts of Justice, and every other den of mischief and iniquity. We are paid at the rate of a penny a line, and as we can sell the same paragraph to almost every paper, we sometimes pick up a very decent day's work. Now and

then the muse is unkind, or the day uncommonly quiet, and then we rather starve; and sometimes the unconscionable editors will clip our paragraphs when they are a little too rhetorical, and snip off two-pence or three-pence at a go. I have many a time had my pot of porter snipped off of my dinner in this way, and have had to dine with dry lips. However, I cannot complain. I rose gradually in the lower ranks of the craft, and am now, I think, in the most comfortable region of literature."

"And pray," said I, "what may you be at present?"

"At present," said he, "I am a regular job-writer, and turn my hand to any thing. I work up the writings of others at so much a sheet; turn off translations; write second-rate articles to fill up reviews and magazines; compile travels and voyages, and furnish theatrical criticisms for the newspapers. All this authorship, you perceive, is anonymous; it gives me no reputation except among the trade; where I am

considered an author of all work, and am always sure of employ. That's the only reputation I want. I sleep soundly, without dread of duns or critics, and leave immortal fame to those that choose to fret and fight about it. Take my word for it, the only happy author in this world is he who is below the care of reputation."

NOTORIETY.

WHEN we had emerged from the literary nest of honest Dribble, and had passed safely through the dangers of Break-neck-stairs, and the labyrinths of Fleet-market, Buckthorne indulged in many comments upon the peep into literary life which he had furnished me.

I expressed my surprise at finding it so different a world from what I had imagined. "It is always so," said he, "with strangers. The land of literature is a fairy land to those who view it from a distance, but like all other landscapes, the charm fades on a nearer approach, and the thorns and briars become visible. The republic of letters is the most factious and discordant of all republics, ancient or modern."

"Yet," said I, smiling, "you would not have me take honest Dribble's experience as a view

of the land. He is but a mousing owl; a mere groundling. We should have quite a different strain from one of those fortunate authors whom we see sporting about the empyreal heights of fashion, like swallows in the blue sky of a summer's day."

"Perhaps we might," replied he, "but I doubt it. I doubt whether if any one, even of the most successful, were to tell his actual feelings, you would not find the truth of friend Dribble's philosophy with respect to reputation. One you would find carrying a gay face to the world, while some vulture critic was preying upon his very liver. Another, who was simple enough to mistake fashion for fame, you would find watching countenances, and cultivating invitations, more ambitious to figure in the *beau monde* than the world of letters, and apt to be rendered wretched by the neglect of an illiterate peer, or a dissipated duchess. Those who were rising to fame, you would find tormented with anxiety to get higher; and those who had gained the summit, in constant apprehension of a decline.

"Even those who are indifferent to the buzz of notoriety, and the farce of fashion, are not much better off, being incessantly harassed by intrusions on their leisure, and interruptions of their pursuits; for, whatever may be his feelings, when once an author is launched into notoriety, he must go the rounds until the idle curiosity of the day is satisfied, and he is thrown aside to make way for some new caprice. Upon the whole, I do not know but he is most fortunate who engages in the whirl through ambition, however tormenting; as it is doubly irksome to be obliged to join in the game without being interested in the stake.

"There is a constant demand in the fashionable world for novelty; every nine days must have its wonder, no matter of what kind. At one time it is an author; at another a fire-eater; at another a composer, an Indian juggler, or an Indian chief; a man from the North Pole or the Pyramids: each figures through his brief term of notoriety, and then makes way for the succeeding wonder. You must know that we

have oddity fanciers among our ladies of rank, who collect about them all kinds of remarkable beings: fiddlers, statesmen, singers, warriors, artists, philosophers, actors, and poets; every kind of personage, in short, who is noted for something peculiar: so that their routs are like fancy balls, where every one comes 'in character.'

"I have had infinite amusement at these parties in noticing how industriously every one was playing a part, and acting out of his natural line. There is not a more complete game at cross purposes than the intercourse of the literary and the great. The fine gentleman is always anxious to be thought a wit, and the wit a fine gentleman.

"I have noticed a lord endeavouring to look wise and to talk learnedly with a man of letters, who was aiming at a fashionable air, and the tone of a man who had lived about town. The peer quoted a score or two of learned authors, with whom he would fain be thought intimate, while the author talked of Sir John this, and Sir

Harry that, and extolled the Burgundy he had drank at Lord Such-a-one's.—Each seemed to forget that he could only be interesting to the other in his proper character. Had the peer been merely a man of erudition, the author would never have listened to his prosing; and had the author known all the nobility in the Court Calendar, it would have given him no interest in the eyes of the peer.

"In the same way I have seen a fine lady, remarkable for beauty, weary a philosopher with flimsy metaphysics, while the philosopher put on an awkward air of gallantry, played with her fan, and prattled about the Opera. I have heard a sentimental poet talk very stupidly with a statesman about the national debt; and on joining a knot of scientific old gentlemen conversing in a corner, expecting to hear the discussion of some valuable discovery, I found they were only amusing themselves with a fat story."

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER.

THE anecdotes I had heard of Buckthorne's early schoolmate, together with a variety of peculiarities which I had remarked in himself, gave me a strong curiosity to know something of his own history. I am a traveller of the good old school, and am fond of the custom laid down in books, according to which, whenever travellers met, they sat down forthwith, and gave a history of themselves and their adventures. This Buckthorne, too, was a man much to my taste; he had seen the world, and mingled with society, yet retained the strong eccentricities of a man who had lived much alone. There was a careless dash of good-humour about him which pleased me exceedingly; and at times an

odd tinge of melancholy mingled with his humour, and gave it an additional zest. He was apt to run into long speculations upon society and manners, and to indulge in whimsical views of human nature; yet there was nothing ill-tempered in his satire. It ran more upon the follies than the vices of mankind; and even the follies of his fellow-man were treated with the leniency of one who felt himself to be but frail. He had evidently been a little chilled and buffeted by fortune, without being soured thereby: as some fruits become mellower and more generous in their flavour from having been bruised and frostbitten.

I have always had a great relish for the conversation of practical philosophers of this stamp, who have profited by the "sweet uses" of adversity without imbibing its bitterness; who have learnt to estimate the world rightly, yet good-humouredly; and who, while they perceive the truth of the saying, that "all is vanity," are yet able to do so without vexation of spirit.

Such a man was Buckthorne. In general a

laughing philosopher; and if at any time a shade of sadness stole across his brow, it was but transient; like a summer cloud, which soon goes by, and freshens and revives the fields over which it passes.

I was walking with him one day in Kensington Gardens—for he was a knowing epicure in all the cheap pleasures and rural haunts within reach of the metropolis. It was a delightful warm morning in spring; and he was in the happy mood of a pastoral citizen, when just turned loose into grass and sunshine. He had been watching a lark which, rising from a bed of daisies and yellow-cups, had sung his way up to a bright snowy cloud floating in the deep blue sky.

"Of all birds," said he, "I should like to be a lark. He revels in the brightest time of the day, in the happiest season of the year, among fresh meadows and opening flowers; and when he has sated himself with the sweetness of earth, he wings his flight up to Heaven as if he would drink in the melody of the morning stars. Hark

to that note! How it comes trilling down upon the ear! What a stream of music, note falling over note in delicious cadence! Who would trouble his head about operas and concerts when he could walk in the fields and hear such music for nothing? These are the enjoyments which set riches at scorn, and make even a poor man independent:

I care not, Fortune, what you do deny:—
  You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
  Through which Aurora shows her bright'ning face;
  You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns by living streams at eve——

"Sir, there are homilies in nature's works worth all the wisdom of the schools, if we could but read them rightly; and one of the pleasantest lessons I ever received in a time of trouble, was from hearing the notes of a lark."

I profited by this communicative vein to intimate to Buckthorne a wish to know something of the events of his life, which I fancied must have been an eventful one.

He smiled when I expressed my desire. "I have no great story," said he, "to relate. A mere tissue of errors and follies. But, such as it is, you shall have one epoch of it, by which you may judge of the rest." And so, without any further prelude, he gave me the following anecdotes of his early adventures.

BUCKTHORNE;

OR,

THE YOUNG MAN OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

I WAS born to very little property, but to great expectations—which is, perhaps, one of the most unlucky fortunes that a man can be born to. My father was a country gentleman, the last of a very ancient and honourable, but decayed family, and resided in an old hunting-lodge in Warwickshire. He was a keen sportsman, and lived to the extent of his moderate income, so that I had little to expect from that quarter; but then I had a rich uncle by the mother's side, a penurious, accumulating curmudgeon, who it was confidently expected would make me his heir, because he was an old ba-

chelor, because I was named after him, and because he hated all the world except myself.

He was, in fact, an inveterate hater, a miser even in misanthropy, and hoarded up a grudge as he did a guinea. Thus, though my mother was an only sister, he had never forgiven her marriage with my father, against whom he had a cold, still, immoveable pique, which had lain at the bottom of his heart, like a stone in a well, ever since they had been school-boys together. My mother, however, considered me as the intermediate being that was to bring every thing again into harmony, for she looked upon me as a prodigy—God bless her! my heart overflows whenever I recall her tenderness. She was the most excellent, the most indulgent of mothers. I was her only child; it was a pity she had no more, for she had fondness of heart enough to have spoiled a dozen!

I was sent at an early age to a public school, sorely against my mother's wishes; but my father insisted that it was the only way to make

boys hardy. The school was kept by a conscientious prig of the ancient system, who did his duty by the boys intrusted to his care, that is to say, we were flogged soundly when we did not get our lessons. We were put into classes, and thus flogged on in droves along the highways of knowledge, in much the same manner as cattle are driven to market, where those that are heavy in gait, or short in leg, have to suffer for the superior alertness or longer limbs of their companions.

For my part, I confess it with shame, I was an incorrigible laggard. I have always had the poetical feeling, that is to say, I have always been an idle fellow, and prone to play the vagabond. I used to get away from my books and school whenever I could, and ramble about the fields. I was surrounded by seductions for such a temperament. The school-house was an old-fashioned whitewashed mansion, of wood and plaster, standing on the skirts of a beautiful village: close by it was the venerable church,

with a tall Gothic spire; before it spread a lovely green valley, with a little stream glistening along through willow groves; while a line of blue hills that bounded the landscape gave rise to many a summer day-dream as to the fairy land that lay beyond.

In spite of all the scourgings I suffered at that school to make me love my book, I cannot but look back upon the place with fondness. Indeed, I considered this frequent flagellation as the common lot of humanity, and the regular mode in which scholars were made.

My kind mother used to lament over my details of the sore trials I underwent in the cause of learning; but my father turned a deaf ear to her expostulations: he had been flogged through school himself, and swore there was no other way of making a man of parts; though, let me speak it with all due reverence, my father was but an indifferent illustration of his theory, for he was considered a grievous blockhead.

My poetical temperament evinced itself at a very early period. The village church was at-

tended every Sunday by a neighbouring squire, the lord of the manor, whose park stretched quite to the village, and whose spacious country-seat seemed to take the church under its protection; indeed, you would have thought the church had been consecrated to him instead of to the Deity. The parish clerk bowed low before him, and the vergers humbled themselves unto the dust in his presence. He always entered a little late, and with some stir; striking his cane emphatically on the ground, swaying his hat in his hand, and looking loftily to the right and left as he walked slowly up the aisle; and the parson, who always ate his Sunday dinner with him, never commenced service until he appeared. He sat with his family in a large pew, gorgeously lined, humbling himself devoutly on velvet cushions, and reading lessons of meekness and lowliness of spirit out of splendid gold and morocco prayer books. Whenever the parson spoke of the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of heaven, the eyes of the congregation would turn towards the "grand pew," and I

thought the squire seemed pleased with the application.

The pomp of this pew, and the aristocratical air of the family, struck my imagination wonderfully; and I fell desperately in love with a little daughter of the squire's, about twelve years of age. This freak of fancy made me more truant from my studies than ever. I used to stroll about the squire's park, and would lurk near the house, to catch glimpses of this little damsel at the windows, or playing about the lawn, or walking out with her governess.

I had not enterprise nor impudence enough to venture from my concealment; indeed I felt like an arrant poacher, until I read one or two of Ovid's Metamorphoses, when I pictured myself as some sylvan deity, and she a coy wood-nymph of whom I was in pursuit. There is something extremely delicious in these early awakenings of the tender passion. I can feel even at this moment the thobbing of my boyish bosom whenever by chance I caught a glimpse of her white frock fluttering among the shrubbery. I carried

about in my bosom a volume of Waller, which I had purloined from my mother's library; and I applied to my little fair one all the compliments lavished upon Sacharissa.

At length I danced with her at a school-ball. I was so awkward a booby that I dared scarcely speak to her: I was filled with awe and embarrassment in her presence; but I was so inspired, that my poetical temperament for the first time broke out in verse, and I fabricated some glowing lines, in which I berhymed the little lady under the favourite name of Sacharissa. I slipped the verses, trembling and blushing, into her hand the next Sunday as she came out of church. The little prude handed them to her mamma; the mamma handed them to the squire; the squire, who had no soul for poetry, sent them in dudgeon to the schoolmaster; and the schoolmaster, with a barbarity worthy of the dark ages, gave me a sound and peculiarly humiliating flogging for thus trespassing upon Parnassus. This was a sad outset for a votary of the muse: it ought to have cured me of my

passion for poetry; but it only confirmed it, for I felt the spirit of a martyr rising within me. What was as well, perhaps, it cured me of my passion for the young lady; for I felt so indignant at the ignominious horsing I had incurred in celebrating her charms, that I could not hold up my head in church. Fortunately for my wounded sensibility, the Midsummer holidays came on, and I returned home. My mother, as usual, inquired into all my school concerns, my little pleasures, and cares, and sorrows; for boyhood has its share of the one as well as of the others. I told her all, and she was indignant at the treatment I had experienced. She fired up at the arrogance of the squire, and the prudery of the daughter; and as to the schoolmaster, she wondered where was the use of having schoolmasters, and why boys could not remain at home and be educated by tutors, under the eye of their mothers. She asked to see the verses I had written, and she was delighted with them; for to confess the truth, she had a pretty taste in poetry. She even showed them to the

parson's wife, who protested they were charming; and the parson's three daughters insisted on each having a copy of them.

All this was exceedingly balsamic, and I was still more consoled and encouraged, when the young ladies, who were the blue stockings of the neighbourhood, and had read Dr. Johnson's Lives quite through, assured my mother that great geniuses never studied, but were always idle; upon which I began to surmise that I was myself something out of the common run. My father, however, was of a very different opinion; for when my mother, in the pride of her heart, showed him my copy of verses, he threw them out of the window, asking her "if she meant to make a ballad-monger of the boy." But he was a careless, common-thinking man, and I cannot say that I ever loved him much; my mother absorbed all my filial affection.

I used occasionally, during holidays, to be sent on short visits to the uncle, who was to make me his heir; they thought it would keep me in his mind, and render him fond of me. He

was a withered, anxious-looking old fellow, and lived in a desolate old country seat, which he suffered to go to ruin from absolute niggardliness. He kept but one man-servant, who had lived, or rather starved, with him for years. No woman was allowed to sleep in the house. A daughter of the old servant lived by the gate, in what had been a porter's lodge, and was permitted to come into the house about an hour each day, to make the beds, and cook a morsel of provisions. The park that surrounded the house was all run wild; the trees grown out of shape; the fish-ponds stagnant; the urns and statues fallen from their pedestals, and buried among the rank grass. The hares and pheasants were so little molested, except by poachers, that they bred in great abundance, and sported about the rough lawns and weedy avenues. To guard the premises and frighten off robbers, of which he was somewhat apprehensive, and visitors, whom he had in almost equal awe, my uncle kept two or three blood-hounds, who were always prowling round

the house, and were the dread of the neighbouring peasantry. They were gaunt and half starved, seemed ready to devour one from mere hunger, and were an effectual check on any stranger's approach to this wizard castle.

Such was my uncle's house, which I used to visit now and then during the holidays. I was, as I before said, the old man's favourite; that is to say, he did not hate me so much as he did the rest of the world. I had been apprised of his character, and cautioned to cultivate his good will; but I was too young and careless to be a courtier, and, indeed, have never been sufficiently studious of my interests to let them govern my feelings. However, we jogged on very well together, and as my visits cost him almost nothing, they did not seem to be very unwelcome. I brought with me my fishing-rod, and half supplied the table from the fish-ponds.

Our meals were solitary and unsocial. My uncle rarely spoke; he pointed for whatever he wanted, and the servant perfectly understood

him. Indeed, his man John, or Iron John, as he was called in the neighbourhood, was a counterpart of his master. He was a tall, bony old fellow, with a dry wig, that seemed made of cow's tail, and a face as tough as though it had been made of cow's hide. He was generally clad in a long, patched livery coat, taken out of the wardrobe of the house, and which bagged loosely about him, having evidently belonged to some corpulent predecessor in the more plenteous days of the mansion. From long habits of taciturnity the hinges of his jaws seemed to have grown absolutely rusty, and it cost him as much effort to set them ajar, and to let out a tolerable sentence, as it would have done to set open the iron gates of the park, and let out the old family carriage that was dropping to pieces in the coach-house.

I cannot say, however, but that I was for some time amused with my uncle's peculiarities. Even the very desolateness of the establishment had something in it that hit my fancy. When the weather was fine, I used to amuse myself in a

solitary way, by rambling about the park, and coursing like a colt across its lawns. The hares and pheasants seemed to stare with surprise to see a human being walking these forbidden grounds by daylight. Sometimes I amused myself by jerking stones, or shooting at birds with a bow and arrows, for to have used a gun would have been treason. Now and then my path was crossed by a little red-headed, ragged-tailed urchin, the son of the woman at the lodge, who ran wild about the premises. I tried to draw him into familiarity, and to make a companion of him; but he seemed to have imbibed the strange unsocial character of every thing around him, and always kept aloof; so I considered him as another Orson, and amused myself with shooting at him with my bow and arrows, and he would hold up his breeches with one hand, and scamper away like a deer.

There was something in all this loneliness and wildness strangely pleasing to me. The great stables, empty and weather-broken, with the names of favourite horses over the vacant

stalls; the windows bricked and boarded up; the broken roofs, garrisoned by rooks and jackdaws, all had a singularly forlorn appearance: one would have concluded the house to be totally uninhabited, were it not for a little thread of blue smoke, which now and then curled up like a corkscrew from the centre of one of the wide chimneys, where my uncle's starveling meal was cooking.

My uncle's room was in a remote corner of the building, strongly secured, and generally locked. I was never admitted into this strong hold, where the old man would remain for the greater part of the time, drawn up like a veteran spider, in the citadel of his web. The rest of the mansion, however, was open to me, and I wandered about it unconstrained. The damp and rain which beat in through the broken windows crumbled the paper from the walls, mouldered the pictures, and gradually destroyed the furniture. I loved to roam about the wide waste chambers in bad weather, and listen to the howling of the wind, and the banging about of the

doors and window-shutters. I pleased myself with the idea how completely, when I came to the estate, I would renovate all things, and make the old building ring with merriment, till it was astonished at its own jocundity.

The chamber which I occupied on these visits was the same that had been my mother's when a girl. There was still the toilet-table of her own adorning, the landscapes of her own drawing. She had never seen it since her marriage, but would often ask me if every thing was still the same. All was just the same, for I loved that chamber on her account, and had taken pains to put every thing in order, and to mend all the flaws in the windows with my own hands. I anticipated the time when I should once more welcome her to the house of her fathers, and restore her to this little nestling place of her childhood.

At length my evil genius, or what, perhaps, is the same thing, the Muse, inspired me with the notion of rhyming again. My uncle, who never went to church, used on Sundays to read

chapters out of the Bible; and Iron John, the woman from the lodge, and myself, were his congregation. It seemed to be all one to him what he read, so long as it was something from the Bible: sometimes, therefore, it would be the Song of Solomon, and this withered anatomy would read about being "stayed with flagons, and comforted with apples, for he was sick of love." Sometimes he would hobble, with spectacles on nose, through whole chapters of hard Hebrew names in Deuteronomy, at which the poor woman would sigh and groan as if wonderfully moved. His favourite book, however, was "The Pilgrim's Progress;" and when he came to that part which treats of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, I thought invariably of him and his desolate old country seat. So much did the idea amuse me, that I took to scribbling about it under the trees in the park, and in a few days had made some progress in a poem, in which I had given a description of the place, under the name of Doubting Castle, and personified my uncle as Giant Despair.

I lost my poem somewhere about the house, and I soon suspected that my uncle had found it, as he harshly intimated to me that I could return home, and that I need not come and see him again till he should send for me.

Just about this time my mother died.—I cannot dwell upon the circumstance. My heart, careless and wayward as it is, gushes with the recollection. Her death was an event that perhaps gave a turn to all my after fortunes. With her died all that made home attractive. I had no longer any body whom I was ambitious to please, or fearful to offend. My father was a good kind of man in his way, but he had bad maxims in education, and we differed on material points. It makes a vast difference in opinion about the utility of the rod, which end happens to fall to one's share. I never could be brought into my father's way of thinking on the subject.

I now, therefore, began to grow very impatient of remaining at school, to be flogged for things that I did not like. I longed for variety, espe-

cially now that I had not my uncle's to resort to, by way of diversifying the dulness of school, with the dreariness of his country seat.

I was now almost seventeen, tall for my age, and full of idle fancies. I had a roving, inextinguishable desire to see different kinds of life, and different orders of society; and this vagrant humour had been fostered in me by Tom Dribble, the prime wag and great genius of the school, who had all the rambling propensities of a poet.

I used to sit at my desk in the school, on a fine summer's day, and instead of studying the book which lay open before me, my eye was gazing through the window on the green fields and blue hills. How I envied the happy groups seated on the tops of stage-coaches, chatting, and joking, and laughing, as they were whirled by the school-house on their way to the metropolis. Even the waggoners, trudging along beside their ponderous teams, and traversing the kingdom from one end to the other, were objects of envy to me: I fancied to myself what adventures they must experience, and what odd

scenes of life they must witness. All this was, doubtless, the poetical temperament working within me, and tempting me forth into a world of its own creation, which I mistook for the world of real life.

While my mother lived, this strong propensity to rove was counteracted by the stronger attractions of home, and by the powerful ties of affection which drew me to her side; but now that she was gone, the attractions had ceased; the ties were severed. I had no longer an anchorage-ground for my heart, but was at the mercy of every vagrant impulse. Nothing but the narrow allowance on which my father kept me, and the consequent penury of my purse, prevented me from mounting the top of a stage-coach, and launching myself adrift on the great ocean of life.

Just about this time the village was agitated, for a day or two, by the passing through of several caravans, containing wild beasts, and other spectacles, for a great fair annually held at a neighbouring town.

I had never seen a fair of any consequence, and my curiosity was powerfully awakened by this bustle of preparation. I gazed with respect and wonder at the vagrant personages who accompanied these caravans. I loitered about the village inn, listening with curiosity and delight to the slang talk and cant jokes of the showmen and their followers; and I felt an eager desire to witness this fair, which my fancy decked out as something wonderfully fine.

A holiday afternoon presented, when I could be absent from noon until evening. A waggon was going from the village to the fair: I could not resist the temptation, nor the eloquence of Tom Dribble, who was a truant to the very heart's core. We hired seats, and set off full of boyish expectation. I promised myself that I would but take a peep at the land of promise, and hasten back again before my absence should be noticed.

Heavens! how happy I was on arriving at the fair! How I was enchanted with the world of fun and pageantry around me! The humours

of Punch, the feats of the equestrians, the magical tricks of the conjurors! But what principally caught my attention was an itinerant theatre, where a tragedy, pantomime, and farce, were all acted in the course of half an hour; and more of the dramatis personæ murdered than at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden in the course of a whole evening. I have since seen many a play performed by the best actors in the world, but never have I derived half the delight from any that I did from this first representation.

There was a ferocious tyrant in a skull-cap like an inverted porringer, and a dress of red baize, magnificently embroidered with gilt leather; with his face so bewhiskered, and his eye-brows so knit and expanded with burnt cork, that he made my heart quake within me as he stamped about the little stage. I was enraptured, too, with the surpassing beauty of a distressed damsel in faded pink silk, and dirty white muslin, whom he held in cruel captivity by way of gaining her affections, and who wept,

and wrung her hands, and flourished a ragged white handkerchief from the top of an impregnable tower of the size of a bandbox.

Even after I had come out from the play, I could not tear myself from the vicinity of the theatre, but lingered, gazing and wondering, and laughing at the dramatis personæ as they performed their antics, or danced upon a stage in front of the booth, to decoy a new set of spectators.

I was so bewildered by the scene, and so lost in the crowd of sensations that kept swarming upon me, that I was like one entranced. I lost my companion, Tom Dribble, in a tumult and scuffle that took place near one of the shows; but I was too much occupied in mind to think long about him. I strolled about until dark, when the fair was lighted up, and a new scene of magic opened upon me. The illumination of the tents and booths, the brilliant effect of the stages decorated with lamps, with dramatic groups flaunting about them in gaudy dresses, contrasted splendidly with the surrounding darkness; while the uproar of drums, trumpets,

fiddles, hautboys, and cymbals, mingled with the harangues of the showmen, the squeaking of Punch, and the shouts and laughter of the crowd, all united to complete my giddy distraction.

Time flew without my perceiving it. When I came to myself and thought of the school, I hastened to return. I inquired for the waggon in which I had come: it had been gone for hours! I asked the time: it was almost midnight! A sudden quaking seized me. How was I to get back to school? I was too weary to make the journey on foot, and I knew not where to apply for a conveyance. Even if I should find one, could I venture to disturb the school-house long after midnight—to arouse that sleeping lion the usher in the very midst of his night's rest?—the idea was too dreadful for a delinquent school-boy. All the horrors of return rushed upon me. My absence must long before this have been remarked,—and absent for a whole night!—a deed of darkness not easily to be expiated. The rod of the pedagogue budded forth into tenfold terrors before my

affrighted fancy. I pictured to myself punishment and humiliation in every variety of form, and my heart sickened at the picture. Alas! how often are the petty ills of boyhood as painful to our tender natures, as are the sterner evils of manhood to our robuster minds.

I wandered about among the booths, and I might have derived a lesson from my actual feelings, how much the charms of this world depend upon ourselves; for I no longer saw any thing gay or delightful in the revelry around me. At length I lay down, wearied and perplexed, behind one of the large tents, and, covering myself with the margin of the tent cloth, to keep off the night chill, I soon fell asleep.

I had not slept long, when I was awakened by the noise of merriment within an adjoining booth. It was the itinerant theatre, rudely constructed of boards and canvas. I peeped through an aperture, and saw the whole dramatis personæ, tragedy, comedy, and pantomime, all refreshing themselves after the final dismissal of their auditors. They were merry and game-

some, and made the flimsy theatre ring with their laughter. I was astonished to see the tragedy tyrant in red baize and fierce whiskers, who had made my heart quake as he strutted about the boards, now transformed into a fat, good-humoured fellow; the beaming porringer laid aside from his brow, and his jolly face washed from all the terrors of burnt cork. I was delighted, too, to see the distressed damsel, in faded silk and dirty muslin, who had trembled under his tyranny, and afflicted me so much by her sorrows, now seated familiarly on his knee, and quaffing from the same tankard. Harlequin lay asleep on one of the benches; and monks, satyrs, and vestal virgins, were grouped together, laughing outrageously at a broad story told by an unhappy count, who had been barbarously murdered in the tragedy.

This was, indeed, novelty to me. It was a peep into another planet. I gazed and listened with intense curiosity and enjoyment. They had a thousand odd stories and jokes about the events of the day, and burlesque descriptions and

mimickings of the spectators, who had been admiring them. Their conversation was full of allusions to their adventures at different places where they had exhibited; the characters they had met with in different villages; and the ludicrous difficulties in which they had occasionally been involved. All past cares and troubles were now turned, by these thoughtless beings, into matter of merriment, and made to contribute to the gaiety of the moment. They had been moving from fair to fair about the kingdom, and were the next morning to set out on their way to London. My resolution was taken. I stole from my nest; and crept through a hedge into a neighbouring field, where I went to work to make a tatterdemallion of myself. I tore my clothes; soiled them with dirt; begrimed my face and hands, and, crawling near one of the booths, purloined an old hat, and left my new one in its place. It was an honest theft, and, I hope, may not hereafter rise up in judgment against me.

I now ventured to the scene of merry-making,

and presenting myself before the dramatic corps, offered myself as a volunteer. I felt terribly agitated and abashed, for never before had I stood " in such presence." I had addressed myself to the manager of the company. He was a fat man, dressed in dirty white, with a red sash fringed with tinsel swathed round his body; his face was smeared with paint, and a majestic plume towered from an old spangled black bonnet. He was the Jupiter Tonans of this Olympus, and was surrounded by the inferior gods and goddesses of his court. He sat on the end of a bench, by a table, with one arm akimbo, and the other extended to the handle of a tankard, which he had slowly set down from his lips as he surveyed me from head to foot. It was a moment of awful scrutiny; and I fancied the groups around all watching as in silent suspense, and waiting for the imperial nod.

He questioned me as to who I was; what were my qualifications; and what terms I expected. I passed myself off for a discharged servant from a gentleman's family; and as, hap-

pily, one does not require a special recommendation to get admitted into bad company, the questions on that head were easily satisfied. As to my accomplishments, I could spout a little poetry, and knew several scenes of plays, which I had learnt at school exhibitions. I could dance——that was enough; no further questions were asked me as to accomplishments; it was the very thing they wanted; and as I asked no wages, but merely meat and drink, and safe conduct about the world, a bargain was struck in a moment.

Behold me, therefore, transformed on a sudden from a gentleman student to a dancing buffoon; for such, in fact, was the character in which I made my debut. I was one of those who formed the groups in the dramas, and was principally employed on the stage in front of the booth to attract company. I was equipped as a satyr, in a dress of drab frieze that fitted to my shape, with a great laughing mask, ornamented with huge ears and short horns. I was pleased with the disguise, because it kept me from the danger

of being discovered, whilst we were in that part of the country; and as I had merely to dance and make antics, the character was favourable to a debutant—being almost on a par with Simon Snug's part of the lion, which required nothing but roaring.

I cannot tell you how happy I was at this sudden change in my situation. I felt no degradation, for I had seen too little of society to be thoughtful about the difference of rank; and a boy of sixteen is seldom aristocratical. I had given up no friend, for there seemed to be no one in the world that cared for me now my poor mother was dead; I had given up no pleasure, for my pleasure was to ramble about and indulge the flow of a poetical imagination, and I now enjoyed it in perfection. There is no life so truly poetical as that of a dancing buffoon.

It may be said that all this argued groveling inclinations. I do not think so. Not that I mean to vindicate myself in any great degree: I know too well what a whimsical compound I am. But in this instance I was seduced by no

love of low company, nor disposition to indulge in low vices. I have always despised the brutally vulgar, and I have always had a disgust at vice, whether in high or low life. I was governed merely by a sudden and thoughtless impulse. I had no idea of resorting to this profession as a mode of life, or of attaching myself to these people, as my future class of society. I thought merely of a temporary gratification to my curiosity, and an indulgence of my humours. I had already a strong relish for the peculiarities of character and the varieties of situation, and I have always been fond of the comedy of life, and desirous of seeing it through all its shifting scenes.

In mingling, therefore, among mountebanks and buffoons, I was protected by the very vivacity of imagination which had led me among them. I moved about, enveloped, as it were, in a protecting delusion, which my fancy spread around me. I assimilated to these people only as they struck me poetically; their whimsical ways and

a certain picturesqueness in their mode of life entertained me; but I was neither amused nor corrupted by their vices. In short, I mingled among them, as Prince Hal did among his graceless associates, merely to gratify my humour.

I did not investigate my motives in this manner at the time, for I was too careless and thoughtless to reason about the matter; but I do so now, when I look back with trembling to think of the ordeal to which I unthinkingly exposed myself, and the manner in which I passed through it. Nothing, I am convinced, but the poetical temperament that hurried me into the scrape, brought me out of it without my becoming an arrant vagabond.

Full of the enjoyment of the moment, giddy with the wildness of animal spirits, so rapturous in a boy, I capered, I danced, I played a thousand fantastic tricks about the stage, in the villages in which we exhibited; and I was universally pronounced the most agreeable monster

that had ever been seen in those parts. My disappearance from school had awakened my father's anxiety; for I one day heard a description of myself cried before the very booth in which I was exhibiting, with the offer of a reward for any intelligence of me. I had no great scruple about letting my father suffer a little uneasiness on my account; it would punish him for past indifference, and would make him value me the more when he found me again.

I have wondered that some of my comrades did not recognise me in the stray sheep that was cried; but they were all, no doubt, occupied by their own concerns. They were all labouring seriously in their antic vocation; for folly was a mere trade with most of them, and they often grinned and capered with heavy hearts. With me, on the contrary, it was all real. I acted *con amore*, and rattled and laughed from the irrepressible gaiety of my spirits. It is true that, now and then, I started and looked grave on receiving a sudden thwack from the wooden sword of Harlequin in the course of my gambols,

as it brought to mind the birch of my schoolmaster. But I soon got accustomed to it, and bore all the cuffing, and kicking, and tumbling about, which form the practical wit of your itinerant pantomime, with a good humour that made me a prodigious favourite.

The country campaign of the troop was soon at an end, and we set off for the metropolis, to perform at the fairs which are held in its vicinity. The greater part of our theatrical property was sent on direct, to be in a state of preparation for the opening of the fairs; while a detachment of the company travelled slowly on, foraging among the villages. I was amused with the desultory, haphazard kind of life we led; here to-day and gone to-morrow. Sometimes reveling in ale-houses, sometimes feasting under hedges in the green fields. When audiences were crowded, and business profitable, we fared well; and when otherwise, we fared scantily, consoled ourselves, and made up with anticipations of the next day's success.

At length the increasing frequency of coaches

hurrying past us, covered with passengers; the increasing number of carriages, carts, waggons, gigs, droves of cattle and flocks of sheep, all thronging the road; the snug country boxes with trim flower-gardens, twelve feet square, and their trees twelve feet high, all powdered with dust; and the innumerable seminaries for young ladies and gentlemen situated along the road for the benefit of country air and rural retirement; all these insignia announced that the mighty London was at hand. The hurry, and the crowd, and the bustle, and the noise, and the dust, increased as we proceeded, until I saw the great cloud of smoke hanging in the air, like a canopy of state, over this queen of cities.

In this way, then, did I enter the metropolis; a strolling vagabond; on the top of a caravan, with a crew of vagabonds about me; but I was as happy as a prince; for, like Prince Hal, I felt, myself superior to my situation, and knew that I could at any time cast it off, and emerge into my proper sphere.

How my eyes sparkled as we passed Hyde

Park-corner, and I saw splendid equipages rolling by with powdered footmen behind, in rich liveries, with fine nosegays, and gold-headed canes; and with lovely women within, so sumptuously dressed, and so surpassingly fair! I was always extremely sensible to female beauty; and here I saw it in all its power of fascination; for whatever may be said of "beauty unadorned," there is something almost awful in female loveliness decked out in jewelled state. The swan-like neck encircled with diamonds; the raven locks clustered with pearls; the ruby glowing on the snowy bosom, are objects which I could never contemplate without emotion; and a dazzling white arm clasped with bracelets, and taper, transparent fingers laden with sparkling rings, are to me irresistible.

My very eyes ached as I gazed at the high and courtly beauty that passed before me. It surpassed all that my imagination had conceived of the sex. I shrunk, for a moment, into shame at the company in which I was placed, and repined at the vast distance that seemed to

intervene between me and these magnificent beings.

I forbear to give a detail of the happy life I led about the skirts of the metropolis, playing at the various fairs held there during the latter part of spring and the beginning of summer. This continued change from place to place, and scene to scene, fed my imagination with novelties, and kept my spirits in a perpetual state of excitement. As I was tall of my age, I aspired, at one time, to play heroes in tragedy; but after two or three trials, I was pronounced by the manager totally unfit for the line; and our first tragic actress, who was a large woman, and held a small hero in abhorrence, confirmed his decision.

The fact is, I had attempted to give point to language which had no point, and nature to scenes which had no nature. They said I did not fill out my characters; and they were right. The characters had all been prepared for a different sort of man. Our tragedy hero was a round, robustious fellow, with an amazing voice;

who stamped and slapped his breast until his wig shook again; and who roared and bellowed out his bombast until every phrase swelled upon the ear like the sound of a kettle-drum. I might as well have attempted to fill out his clothes as his characters. When we had a dialogue together, I was nothing before him, with my slender voice and discriminating manner. I might as well have attempted to parry a cudgel with a small sword. If he found me in any way gaining ground upon him, he would take refuge in his mighty voice, and throw his tones like peals of thunder at me, until they were drowned in the still louder thunders of applause from the audience.

To tell the truth, I suspect that I was not shown fair play, and that there was management at the bottom; for without vanity I think I was a better actor than he. As I had not embarked in the vagabond line through ambition, I did not repine at lack of preferment; but I was grieved to find that a vagrant life was not without its cares and anxieties, and that jealousies, intrigues,

and mad ambition, were to be found even among vagabonds.

Indeed, as I became more familiar with my situation, and the delusions of fancy gradually faded away, I began to find that my associates were not the happy, careless creatures I had at first imagined them. They were jealous of each other's talents; they quarrelled about parts, the same as the actors on the grand theatres; they quarrelled about dresses; and there was one robe of yellow silk, trimmed with red, and a head-dress of three rumpled ostrich feathers, which were continually setting the ladies of the company by the ears. Even those who had attained the highest honours were not more happy than the rest; for Mr. Flimsey himself, our first tragedian, and apparently a jovial, good-humoured fellow, confessed to me one day, in the fulness of his heart, that he was a miserable man. He had a brother-in-law, a relative by marriage though not by blood, who was manager of a theatre in a small country town. And this same brother ("a little more than kin but less

than kind") looked down upon him, and treated him with contumely, because, forsooth, he was but a strolling player. I tried to console him with the thoughts of the vast applause he daily received, but it was all in vain. He declared that it gave him no delight, and that he should never be a happy man until the name of Flimsey rivaled the name of Crimp.

How little do those before the scenes know of what passes behind! how little can they judge, from the countenances of actors, of what is passing in their hearts! I have known two lovers quarrel like cats behind the scenes, who were, the moment after, to fly into each other's embraces. And I have dreaded, when our Belvidera was to take her farewell kiss of her Jaffier, lest she should bite a piece out of his cheek. Our tragedian was a rough joker off the stage; our prime clown the most peevish mortal living. The latter used to go about snapping and snarling, with a broad laugh painted on his countenance; and I can assure you, that whatever may be said of the gravity of a monkey,

or the melancholy of a gibed cat, there is no more melancholy creature in existence than a mountebank off duty.

The only thing in which all parties agreed, was to backbite the manager, and cabal against his regulations. This, however, I have since discovered to be a common trait of human nature, and to take place in all communities. It would seem to be the main business of man to repine at government. In all situations of life into which I have looked, I have found mankind divided into two grand parties; those who ride, and those who are ridden. The great struggle of life seems to be which shall keep in the saddle. This, it appears to me, is the fundamental principle of politics, whether in great or little life.—However, I do not mean to moralize—but one cannot always sink the philosopher.

Well then, to return to myself, it was determined, as I said, that I was not fit for tragedy, and, unluckily, as my study was bad, having a very poor memory, I was pronounced unfit for comedy also; besides, the line of young gentle-

men was already engrossed by an actor with whom I could not pretend to enter into competition, he having filled it for almost half a century. I came down again, therefore, to pantomime. In consequence, however, of the good offices of the manager's lady, who had taken a liking to me, I was promoted from the part of the satyr to that of the lover; and with my face patched and painted, a huge cravat of paper, a steeple-crowned hat, and dangling long-skirted sky-blue coat, was metamorphosed into the lover of columbine. My part did not call for much of the tender and sentimental. I had merely to pursue the fugitive fair one; to have a door now and then slammed in my face; to run my head occasionally against a post; to tumble and roll about with pantaloon and the clown; and to endure the hearty thwacks of harlequin's wooden sword.

As ill-luck would have it, my poetical temperament began to ferment within me, and to work out new troubles. The inflammatory air of a great metropolis, added to the rural scenes

in which the fairs were held, such as Greenwich Park, Epping Forest, and the lovely valley of West End, had a powerful effect upon me. While in Greenwich Park, I was witness to the old holiday games of running down hill, and kissing in the ring; and then the firmament of blooming faces and blue eyes that would be turned towards me, as I was playing antics on the stage; all these set my young blood and my poetical vein in full flow. In short, I played the character to the life, and became desperately enamoured of columbine. She was a trim, well-made, tempting girl, with a roguish dimpling face, and fine chestnut hair clustering all about it. The moment I got fairly smitten there was an end to all playing. I was such a creature of fancy and feeling, that I could not put on a pretended, when I was powerfully affected by a real emotion. I could not sport with a fiction that came so near to the fact. I became too natural in my acting to succeed. And then, what a situation for a lover! I was a mere

stripling, and she played with my passion; for girls soon grow more adroit and knowing in these matters than your awkward youngsters. What agonies had I to suffer! Every time that she danced in front of the booth, and made such liberal displays of her charms, I was in torment. To complete my misery, I had a real rival in harlequin, an active, vigorous, knowing varlet of six and twenty. What had a raw, inexperienced youngster like me to hope from such a competition?

I had still, however, some advantages in my favour. In spite of my change of life, I retained that indescribable something which always distinguishes the gentleman; that something which dwells in a man's air and deportment, and not in his clothes; and which it is as difficult for a gentleman to put off, as for a vulgar fellow to put on. The company generally felt it, and used to call me Little Gentleman Jack. The girl felt it too, and, in spite of her predilection for my powerful rival, she liked to flirt with me.

This only aggravated my troubles by increasing my passion, and awakening the jealousy of her party-coloured lover.

Alas! think what I suffered at being obliged to keep up an ineffectual chase after my columbine through whole pantomimes; to see her carried off in the vigorous arms of the happy harlequin; and to be obliged, instead of snatching her from him, to tumble sprawling with pantaloon and the clown; and bear the infernal and degrading thwacks of my rival's weapon of lath, which, may Heaven confound him! (excuse my passion) the villain laid on with a malicious good-will; nay, I could absolutely hear him chuckle and laugh beneath his accursed mask—I beg pardon for growing a little warm in my narrative—I wish to be cool, but these recollections will sometimes agitate me. I have heard and read of many desperate and deplorable situations of lovers, but none, I think, in which true love was ever exposed to so severe and peculiar a trial.

This could not last long: flesh and blood, at

least such flesh and blood as mine, could not bear it. I had repeated heart-burnings and quarrels with my rival, in which he treated me with the mortifying forbearance of a man towards a child. Had he quarrelled outright with me, I could have stomached it, at least I should have known what part to take; but to be humoured and treated as a child in the presence of my mistress, when I felt all the bantam spirit of a little man swelling within me—Gods! it was insufferable!

At length, we were exhibiting one day at West End fair, which was at that time a very fashionable resort, and often beleaguered with gay equipages from town. Among the spectators that filled the front row of our little canvas theatre one afternoon, when I had to figure in a pantomime, were a number of young ladies from a boarding-school, with their governess. Guess my confusion when, in the midst of my antics, I beheld among the number my quondam flame; her whom I had berhymed at school, her for whose charms I had smarted so severely, the

cruel Sacharissa! What was worse, I fancied she recollected me, and was repeating the story of my humiliating flagellation, for I saw her whispering to her companions and her governess. I lost all consciousness of the part I was acting, and of the place where I was. I felt shrunk to nothing, and could have crept into a rat-hole—unluckily, none was open to receive me. Before I could recover from my confusion, I was tumbled over by pantaloon and the clown, and I felt the sword of harlequin making vigorous assaults in a manner most degrading to my dignity.

Heaven and earth! was I again to suffer martyrdom in this ignominious manner, in the knowledge and even before the very eyes of this most beautiful, but most disdainful of fair ones? All my long-smothered wrath broke out at once; the dormant feelings of the gentleman arose within me, stung to the quick by intolerable mortification. I sprang on my feet in an instant; leaped upon harlequin like a young tiger, tore off his mask, buffeted him in the face, and soon

shed more blood on the stage than had been spilt upon it during a whole tragic campaign of battles and murders.

As soon as harlequin recovered from his surprise, he returned my assault with interest: I was nothing in his hands. I was game, to be sure, for I was a gentleman; but he had the clownish advantage of bone and muscle. I felt as if I could have fought even unto the death; and I was likely to do so, for he was, according to the boxing phrase, "putting my head into chancery," when the gentle columbine flew to my assistance. God bless the women! they are always on the side of the weak and the oppressed!

The battle now became general; the dramatis personæ ranged on either side. The manager interposed in vain: in vain were his spangled black bonnet and towering white feathers seen whisking about, and nodding, and bobbing in the thickest of the fight. Warriors, ladies, priests, satyrs, kings, queens, gods and goddesses, all joined pell-mell in the fray: never, since the conflict under the walls of Troy, had there been

such a chance-medley warfare of combatants, human and divine. The audience applauded, the ladies shrieked, and fled from the theatre; and a scene of discord ensued that baffles all description.

Nothing but the interference of the peace officers restored some degree of order. The havoc, however, that had been made among dresses and decorations, put an end to all further acting for that day. The battle over, the next thing was to inquire why it was begun; a common question among politicians after a bloody and unprofitable war, and one not always easy to be answered. It was soon traced to me and my unaccountable transport of passion, which they could only attribute to my having *run a muck*. The manager was judge and jury and plaintiff into the bargain; and in such cases justice is always speedily administered. He came out of the fight as sublime a wreck as the Santissima Trinidada. His gallant plumes, which once towered aloft, were drooping about his ears; his robe of state hung in ribands from

his back, and but ill concealed the ravages he had suffered in the rear. He had received kicks and cuffs from all sides during the tumult; for every one took the opportunity of slily gratifying some lurking grudge on his fat carcass. He was a discreet man, and did not choose to declare war with all his company, so he swore all those kicks and cuffs had been given by me, and I let him enjoy the opinion. Some wounds he bore, however, which were the incontestable traces of a woman's warfare: his sleek rosy cheek was scored by trickling furrows, which were ascribed to the nails of my intrepid and devoted columbine. The ire of the monarch was not to be appeased: he had suffered in his person, and he had suffered in his purse; his dignity, too, had been insulted, and that went for something; for dignity is always more irascible the more petty the potentate. He wreaked his wrath upon the beginners of the affray, and columbine and myself were discharged, at once, from the company.

Figure me, then, to yourself, a stripling of little more than sixteen, a gentleman by birth,

a vagabond by trade, turned adrift upon the world, making the best of my way through the crowd of West End fair: my mountebank dress fluttering in rags about me; the weeping columbine hanging upon my arm, in splendid but tattered finery; the tears coursing one by one down her face, carrying off the red paint in torrents, and literally "preying upon her damask cheek."

The crowd made way for us as we passed, and hooted in our rear. I felt the ridicule of my situation, but had too much gallantry to desert this fair one, who had sacrificed every thing for me. Having wandered through the fair, we emerged, like another Adam and Eve, into unknown regions, and "had the world before us where to choose." Never was a more disconsolate pair seen in the soft valley of West End. The luckless columbine cast back many a lingering look at the fair, which seemed to put on a more than usual splendour; its tents, and booths, and party-coloured groups, all brightening in the sunshine, and gleaming among the trees;

and its gay flags and streamers fluttering in the light summer airs. With a heavy sigh she would lean on my arm and proceed. I had no hope nor consolation to give her; but she had linked herself to my fortunes; and she was too much of a woman to desert me.

Pensive and silent, then, we traversed the beautiful fields which lie behind Hampstead, and wandered on, until the fiddle, and the hautboy, and the shout, and the laugh, were swallowed up in the deep sound of the big bass drum, and even that died away into a distant rumble. We passed along the pleasant, sequestered walk of Nightingale-lane.—For a pair of lovers, what scene could be more propitious?—But such a pair of lovers! Not a nightingale sang to soothe us: the very gipsies, who were encamped there during the fair, made no offer to tell the fortunes of such an ill-omened couple, whose fortunes, I suppose, they thought too legibly written to need an interpreter; and the gipsy-children crawled into their cabins, and peeped out fearfully at us as we went by. For a moment I

paused, and was almost tempted to turn gipsy; but the poetical feeling, for the present, was fully satisfied, and I passed on. Thus we travelled and travelled, like a prince and princess in Nursery Tale, until we had traversed a part of Hampstead-heath, and arrived in the vicinity of Jack Straw's Castle. Here, wearied and dispirited, we seated ourselves on the margin of the hill, hard by the very mile-stone where Whittington of yore heard the Bow-bells ring out the presage of his future greatness. Alas! no bell rung an invitation to us, as we looked disconsolately upon the distant city. Old London seemed to wrap itself unsociably in its mantle of brown smoke, and to offer no encouragement to such a couple of tatterdemallions.

For once, at least, the usual course of the pantomime was reversed. Harlequin was jilted, and the lover had carried off columbine in good earnest. But what was I to do with her? I could not take her in my hand, return to my father, throw myself on my knees, and crave his forgiveness and his blessing, according to

dramatic usage. The very dogs would have chased such a draggle-tailed beauty from the grounds.

In the midst of my doleful dumps, some one tapped me on my shoulder, and, looking up, I saw a couple of rough, sturdy fellows standing behind me. Not knowing what to expect, I jumped on my legs, and was preparing again to make battle; but I was tripped up and secured in a twinkling.

"Come, come, young master," said one of the fellows, in a gruff but good-humoured tone, "don't let's have any of your tantrums; one would have thought you had had swing enough for this bout.—Come; it's high time to leave off harlequinading, and go home to your father."

In fact, I had fallen into the hands of remorseless men. The cruel Sacharissa had proclaimed who I was, and that a reward had been offered throughout the country for any tidings of me; and they had seen a description of me which had been inserted in the public papers. Those harpies, therefore, for the mere sake of

filthy lucre, were resolved to deliver me over into the hands of my father, and the clutches of my pedagogue.

It was in vain that I swore I would not leave my faithful and afflicted columbine. It was in vain that I tore myself from their grasp, and flew to her; and vowed to protect her; and wiped the tears from her cheek, and with them a whole blush that might have vied with the carnation for brilliancy. My persecutors were inflexible; they even seemed to exult in our distress; and to enjoy this theatrical display of dirt, and finery, and tribulation. I was carried off in despair, leaving my columbine destitute in the wide world; but many a look of agony did I cast back at her as she stood gazing piteously after me from the brink of Hampstead-hill; so forlorn, so fine, so ragged, so bedraggled, yet so beautiful.

Thus ended my first peep into the world. I returned home, rich in good-for-nothing experience, and dreading the reward I was to receive for my improvement. My reception, however,

was quite different from what I had expected. My father had a spice of the devil in him, and did not seem to like me the worse for my freak; which he termed "sowing my wild oats." He happened to have some of his sporting friends to dine the very day of my return; they made me tell some of my adventures; and laughed heartily at them.

One old fellow, with an outrageously red nose, took to me hugely. I heard him whisper to my father that I was a lad of mettle, and might make something clever; to which my father replied, that I had good points, but was an ill-broken whelp, and required a great deal of the whip. Perhaps this very conversation raised me a little in his esteem, for I found the red-nosed old gentleman was a veteran fox-hunter of the neighbourhood, for whose opinion my father had vast deference. Indeed, I believe he would have pardoned any thing in me more readily than poetry, which he called a cursed, sneaking, puling, housekeeping employment, the bane of all fine manhood. He swore it was unworthy

of a youngster of my expectations, who was one day to have so great an estate, and would be able to keep horses and hounds, and hire poets to write songs for him into the bargain.

I had now satisfied, for a time, my roving propensity. I had exhausted the poetical feeling. I had been heartily buffeted out of my love for theatrical display. I felt humiliated by my exposure, and was willing to hide my head anywhere for a season, so that I might be out of the way of the ridicule of the world; for I found folks not altogether so indulgent abroad as they were at my father's table. I could not stay at home; the house was intolerably doleful now that my mother was no longer there to cherish me. Every thing around spoke mournfully of her. The little flower-garden, in which she delighted, was all in disorder and overrun with weeds. I attempted, for a day or two, to arrange it, but my heart grew heavier and heavier as I laboured. Every little broken-down flower, that I had seen her rear so tenderly, seemed to plead in mute eloquence to my feelings. There

was a favourite honeysuckle which I had seen her often training with assiduity, and had heard her say it should be the pride of her garden. I found it groveling along the ground, tangled and wild, and twining round every worthless weed, and it struck me as an emblem of myself, a mere scatterling, running to waste and uselessness. I could work no longer in the garden.

My father sent me to pay a visit to my uncle, by way of keeping the old gentleman in mind of me. I was received, as usual, without any expression of discontent, which we always considered equivalent to a hearty welcome. Whether he had ever heard of my strolling freak or not I could not discover, he and his man were both so taciturn. I spent a day or two roaming about the dreary mansion and neglected park, and felt at one time, I believe, a touch of poetry, for I was tempted to drown myself in a fish-pond; I rebuked the evil spirit, however, and it left me. I found the same red-headed boy running wild about the park, but I felt in no

humour to hunt him at present. On the contrary, I tried to coax him to me, and to make friends with him; but the young savage was untameable.

When I returned from my uncle's, I remained at home for some time, for my father was disposed, he said, to make a man of me. He took me out hunting with him, and I became a great favourite of the red-nosed squire, because I rode at every thing; never refused the boldest leap, and was always sure to be in at the death. I used often, however, to offend my father at hunting dinners, by taking the wrong side in politics. My father was amazingly ignorant, so ignorant, in fact, as not to know that he knew nothing. He was stanch, however, to church and king, and full of old-fashioned prejudices. Now I had picked up a little knowledge in politics and religion, during my rambles with the strollers, and found myself capable of setting him right as to many of his antiquated notions. I felt it my duty to do so; we were apt, therefore, to differ occasionally in the political dis-

cussions which sometimes arose at those hunting dinners.

I was at that age when a man knows least, and is most vain of his knowledge, and when he is extremely tenacious in defending his opinion upon subjects about which he knows nothing. My father was a hard man for any one to argue with, for he never knew when he was refuted. I sometimes posed him a little, but then he had one argument that always settled the question; he would threaten to knock me down. I believe he at last grew tired of me, because I both outtalked and outrode him. The red-nosed squire, too, got out of conceit of me, because, in the heat of the chase, I rode over him one day as he and his horse lay sprawling in the dirt: so I found myself getting in disgrace with all the world, and would have got heartily out of humour with myself, had I not been kept in tolerable self-conceit by the parson's three daughters.

They were the same who had admired my poetry on a former occasion, when it had brought

me into disgrace at school, and I had ever since retained an exalted idea of their judgment. Indeed, they were young ladies not merely of taste but science. Their education had been superintended by their mother, who was a blue stocking. They knew enough of botany to tell the technical names of all the flowers in the garden, and all their secret concerns into the bargain. They knew music too, not mere common-place music, but Rossini and Mozart, and they sang Moore's Irish Melodies to perfection. They had pretty little work-tables, covered with all kind of objects of taste; specimens of lava, and painted eggs, and work-boxes, painted and varnished by themselves. They excelled in knotting and netting, and painted in water-colours; and made feather fans, and fire-screens, and worked in silks and worsteds; and talked French and Italian, and knew Shakspeare by heart. They even knew something of geology and mineralogy; and went about the neighbourhood knocking stones to pieces, to the great admiration and perplexity of the country folk.

I am a little too minute, perhaps, in detailing their accomplishments, but I wish to let you see that these were not common-place young ladies, but had pretensions quite above the ordinary run. It was some consolation to me, therefore, to find favour in such eyes. Indeed, they had always marked me out for a genius, and considered my late vagrant freak as fresh proof of the fact. They observed that Shakspeare himself had been a mere Pickle in his youth; that he had stolen deer, as every one knew; and kept loose company, and consorted with actors: so I comforted myself marvellously with the idea of having so decided a Shakspearean trait in my character.

The youngest of the three, however, was my grand consolation. She was a pale, sentimental girl, with long "hyacinthine" ringlets hanging about her face. She wrote poetry herself, and we kept up a poetical correspondence. She had a taste for the drama too, and I taught her how to act several of the scenes in Romeo and Juliet. I used to rehearse the gar-

den scene under her lattice, which looked out from among woodbine and honeysuckles into the churchyard. I began to think her amazingly pretty as well as clever, and I believe I should have finished by falling in love with her, had not her father discovered our theatrical studies. He was a studious, abstracted man, generally too much absorbed in his learned and religious labours to notice the little foibles of his daughters, and, perhaps, blinded by a father's fondness; but he unexpectedly put his head out of his study window one day in the midst of a scene, and put a stop to our rehearsals. He had a vast deal of that prosaic good sense which I for ever found a stumblingblock in my poetical path. My rambling freak had not struck the good man as poetically as it had his daughters. He drew his comparison from a different manual. He looked upon me as a prodigal son, and doubted whether I should ever arrive at the happy catastrophe of the fatted calf.

I fancy some intimation was given to my father of this new breaking out of my poetical

temperament, for he suddenly intimated that it was high time I should prepare for the university. I dreaded a return to the school from whence I had eloped: the ridicule of my fellow-scholars, and the glances from the squire's pew, would have been worse than death to me. I was fortunately spared the humiliation. My father sent me to board with a country clergyman, who had three or four other boys under his care. I went to him joyfully, for I had often heard my mother mention him with esteem. In fact, he had been an admirer of hers in his younger days, though too humble in fortune and modest in pretensions to aspire to her hand; but he had ever retained a tender regard for her. He was a good man; a worthy specimen of that valuable body of our country clergy who silently and unostentatiously do a vast deal of good; who are, as it were, woven into the whole system of rural life, and operate upon it with the steady yet unobtrusive influence of temperate piety and learned good sense. He lived in a small village not far from Warwick, one of

those little communities where the scanty flock is, in a manner, folded into the bosom of the pastor. The venerable church, in its grass-grown cemetery, was one of those rural temples which are scattered about our country as if to sanctify the land.

I have the worthy pastor before my mind's eye at this moment, with his mild benevolent countenance, rendered still more venerable by his silver hairs. I have him before me, as I saw him on my arrival, seated in the embowered porch of his small parsonage, with a flower-garden before it, and his pupils gathered round him like his children. I shall never forget his reception of me, for I believe he thought of my poor mother at the time, and his heart yearned towards her child. His eye glistened when he received me at the door, and he took me into his arms as the adopted child of his affections. Never had I been so fortunately placed. He was one of those excellent members of our church, who help out their narrow salaries by instructing a few gentlemen's sons. I am convinced those

little seminaries are among the best nurseries of talent and virtue in the land. Both heart and mind are cultivated and improved. The preceptor is the companion and the friend of his pupils. His sacred character gives him dignity in their eyes, and his solemn functions produce that elevation of mind and sobriety of conduct necessary to those who are to teach youth to think and act worthily.

I speak from my own random observation and experience, but I think I speak correctly. At any rate, I can trace much of what is good in my own heterogeneous compound to the short time I was under the instruction of that good man. He entered into the cares and occupations and amusements of his pupils; and won his way into our confidence, and studied our hearts and minds more intently than we did our books.

He soon sounded the depth of my character. I had become, as I have already hinted, a little liberal in my notions, and apt to philosophise on both politics and religion; having seen something

of men and things, and learnt, from my fellow-philosophers, the strollers, to despise all vulgar prejudices. He did not attempt to cast down my vain glory, nor to question my right view of things; he merely instilled into my mind a little information on these topics; though in a quiet, unobtrusive way, that never ruffled a feather of my self-conceit. I was astonished to find what a change a little knowledge makes in one's mode of viewing matters; and how very different a subject is when one thinks or when one only talks about it. I conceived a vast deference for my teacher, and was ambitious of his good opinion. In my zeal to make a favourable impression, I presented him with a whole ream of my poetry. He read it attentively, smiled, and pressed my hand when he returned it to me, but said nothing. The next day he set me at mathematics.

Somehow or other the process of teaching seemed robbed by him of all its austerity. I was not conscious that he thwarted an inclination or opposed a wish, but I felt that, for the time, my

inclinations were entirely changed. I became fond of study, and zealous to improve myself. I made tolerable advances in studies which I had before considered as unattainable, and I wondered at my own proficiency. I thought, too, I astonished my preceptor, for I often caught his eyes fixed upon me with a peculiar expression; I suspect, since, that he was pensively tracing in my countenance the early lineaments of my mother.

Education was not apportioned by him into tasks and enjoined as a labour, to be abandoned with joy the moment the hour of study was expired. We had, it is true, our allotted hours of occupation to give us habits of method, and of the distribution of time; but they were made pleasant to us, and our feelings were enlisted in the cause. When they were over, education still went on. It pervaded all our relaxations and amusements. There was a steady march of improvement. Much of his instruction was given during pleasant rambles, or when seated on the margin of the Avon; and information

received in that way often makes a deeper impression than when acquired by poring over books. I have many of the pure and eloquent precepts which flowed from his lips associated in my mind with lovely scenes in nature, which make the recollection of them indescribably delightful.

I do not pretend to say that any miracle was effected with me. After all said and done, I was but a weak disciple. My poetical temperament still wrought within me and wrestled hard with wisdom, and, I fear, maintained the mastery. I found mathematics an intolerable task in fine weather. I would be prone to forget my problems to watch the birds hopping about the windows, or the bees humming about the honeysuckles; and whenever I could steal away, I would wander about the grassy borders of the Avon, and excuse this truant propensity to myself with the idea that I was treading classic ground, over which Shakspeare had wandered. What luxurious idleness have I indulged as I lay under the trees and watched the silver waves

rippling through the arches of the broken bridge, and laving the rocky bases of old Warwick Castle; and how often have I thought of sweet Shakspeare, and in my boyish enthusiasm have kissed the waves which had washed his native village.

My good preceptor would often accompany me in these desultory rambles. He sought to get hold of this vagrant mood of mind and turn it to some account. He endeavoured to teach me to mingle thought with mere sensation; to moralize on the scenes around; and to make the beauties of nature administer to the understanding and the heart. He endeavoured to direct my imagination to high and noble objects, and to fill it with lofty images. In a word, he did all he could to make the best of a poetical temperament, and to counteract the mischief which had been done to me by my great expectations.

Had I been earlier put under the care of the good pastor, or remained with him a longer time, I really believe he would have made some-

thing of me. He had already brought a great deal of what had been flogged into me into tolerable order, and had weeded out much of the unprofitable wisdom which had sprung up in my vagabondizing. I already began to find that with all my genius a little study would be no disadvantage to me; and, in spite of my vagrant freaks, I began to doubt my being a second Shakspeare.

Just as I was making these precious discoveries, the good parson died. It was a melancholy day throughout the neighbourhood. He had his little flock of scholars, his children as he used to call us, gathered round him in his dying moments; and he gave us the parting advice of a father, now that he had to leave us, and we were to be separated from each other and scattered about in the world. He took me by the hand, and talked with me earnestly and affectionately, and called to mind my mother, and used her name to enforce his dying exhortations, for I rather think he considered me the most erring and heedless of his flock. He held my

hand in his, long after he had done speaking, and kept his eyes fixed on me tenderly and almost piteously: his lips moved as if he were silently praying for me; and he died away, still holding me by the hand.

There was not a dry eye in the church when the funeral service was read from the pulpit from which he had so often preached. When the body was committed to the earth, our little band gathered round it, and watched the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. The parishioners looked at us with sympathy; for we were mourners not merely in dress but in heart. We lingered about the grave, and clung to one another for a time, weeping and speechless, and then parted, like a band of brothers parting from the paternal hearth, never to assemble there again.

How had the gentle spirit of that good man sweetened our natures and linked our young hearts together by the kindest ties! I have always had a throb of pleasure at meeting with an old school-mate, even though one of my

truant associates; but whenever, in the course of my life, I have encountered one of that little flock with which I was folded on the banks of the Avon, it has been with a gush of affection, and a glow of virtue, that for the moment have made me a better man.

I was now sent to Oxford, and was wonderfully impressed on first entering it as a student. Learning here puts on all its majesty; it is lodged in palaces; it is sanctified by the sacred ceremonies of religion; it has a pomp and circumstance which powerfully affect the imagination. Such, at least, it had in my eyes, thoughtless as I was. My previous studies with the worthy pastor had prepared me to regard it with deference and awe. He had been educated here, and always spoke of the University with filial fondness and classic veneration. When I beheld the clustering spires and pinnacles of this most august of cities rising from the plain, I hailed them in my enthusiasm as the points of a diadem which the nation had placed upon the brows of science.

For a time old Oxford was full of enjoyment for me. There was a charm about its monastic buildings; its great Gothic quadrangles; its solemn halls, and shadowy cloisters. I delighted, in the evenings, to get in places surrounded by the colleges, where all modern buildings were screened from the sight, and to see the professors and students sweeping along in the dusk in their antiquated caps and gowns. I seemed for a time to be transported among the people and edifices of the old times. I was a frequent attendant, also, of the evening service in the New College Hall, to hear the fine organ, and the choir swelling an anthem in that solemn building, where painting, music, and architecture are in such admirable unison.

A favourite haunt, too, was the beautiful walk bordered by lofty elms along the river, behind the gray walls of Magdalen College, which goes by the name of Addison's Walk, from being his favourite resort when an Oxford student. I became also a lounger in the Bodleian library, and a great dipper into books, though I cannot

say that I studied them; in fact, being no longer under direction nor control, I was gradually relapsing into mere indulgence of the fancy. Still this would have been pleasant and harmless enough, and I might have awakened from mere literary dreaming to something better. The chances were in my favour, for the riotous times of the University were past. The days of hard drinking were at an end. The old feuds of "Town and Gown," like the civil wars of the White and Red Rose, had died away, and student and citizen slept in peace and whole skins, without risk of being summoned in the night to bloody brawl. It had become the fashion to study at the University, and the odds were always in favour of my following the fashion. Unluckily, however, I fell in company with a special knot of young fellows, of lively parts and ready wit, who had lived occasionally upon town, and become initiated into the Fancy. They voted study to be the toil of dull minds, by which they slowly crept up the hill, while genius arrived at it at a bound. I felt ashamed

to play the owl among such gay birds; so I threw by my books, and became a man of spirit.

As my father made me a tolerable allowance, notwithstanding the narrowness of his income, having an eye always to my great expectations, I was enabled to appear to advantage among my companions. I cultivated all kinds of sports and exercises. I was one of the most expert oarsmen that rowed on the Isis. I boxed, fenced, angled, shot, and hunted, and my rooms in college were always decorated with whips of all kinds, spurs, fowling-pieces, fishing-rods, foils, and boxing-gloves. A pair of leather breeches would seem to be throwing one leg out of the half-open drawers, and empty bottles lumbered the bottom of every closet.

My father came to see me at college when I was in the height of my career. He asked me how I came on with my studies, and what kind of hunting there was in the neighbourhood. He examined my various sporting apparatus with a curious eye; wanted to know if any of the professors were fox-hunters, and whether they were

generally good shots, for he suspected their studying so much must be hurtful to the sight. We had a day's shooting together: I delighted him with my skill, and astonished him by my learned disquisitions on horse-flesh, and on Manton's guns; so, upon the whole, he departed highly satisfied with my improvement at college.

I do not know how it is, but I cannot be idle long without getting in love. I had not been a very long time a man of spirit, therefore, before I became deeply enamoured of a shopkeeper's daughter in the High-street, who, in fact, was the admiration of many of the students. I wrote several sonnets in praise of her, and spent half of my pocket-money at the shop, in buying articles which I did not want, that I might have an opportunity of speaking to her. Her father, a severe-looking old gentleman, with bright silver buckles, and a crisp-curled wig, kept a strict guard on her, as the fathers generally do upon their daughters in Oxford, and well they may. I tried to get into his good graces, and to be

sociable with him, but all in vain. I said several good things in his shop, but he never laughed; he had no relish for wit and humour. He was one of those dry old gentlemen who keep youngsters at bay. He had already brought up two or three daughters, and was experienced in the ways of students.—He was as knowing and wary as a gray old badger that has often been hunted. To see him on Sunday, so stiff and starched in his demeanour, so precise in his dress, with his daughter under his arm, was enough to deter all graceless youngsters from approaching.

I managed, however, in spite of his vigilance, to have several conversations with the daughter, as I cheapened articles in the shop. I made terrible long bargains, and examined the articles over and over before I purchased. In the mean time, I would convey a sonnet or an acrostic under cover of a piece of cambric, or slipped into a pair of stockings; I would whisper soft nonsense into her ear as I haggled about the price; and would squeeze her hand tenderly as

I received my halfpence of change in a bit of whity-brown paper. Let this serve as a hint to all haberdashers who have pretty daughters for shop-girls, and young students for customers. I do not know whether my words and looks were very eloquent, but my poetry was irresistible; for, to tell the truth, the girl had some literary taste, and was seldom without a book from the circulating library.

By the divine power of poetry, therefore, which is so potent with the lovely sex, did I subdue the heart of this fair little haberdasher. We carried on a sentimental correspondence for a time across the counter, and I supplied her with rhyme by the stocking-full. At length I prevailed on her to grant an assignation. But how was this to be effected? Her father kept her always under his eye; she never walked out alone; and the house was locked up the moment that the shop was shut. All these difficulties served but to give zest to the adventure. I proposed that the assignation should be in her own chamber, into which I would climb at night.

The plan was irresistible—A cruel father, a secret lover, and a clandestine meeting! All the little girl's studies from the circulating library seemed about to be realised.

But what had I in view in making this assignation? Indeed, I know not. I had no evil intentions, nor can I say that I had any good ones. I liked the girl, and wanted to have an opportunity of seeing more of her; and the assignation was made, as I have done many things else, heedlessly and without forethought. I asked myself a few questions of the kind, after all my arrangements were made, but the answers were very unsatisfactory. "Am I to ruin this poor thoughtless girl?" said I to myself. "No!" was the prompt and indignant answer. "Am I to run away with her?"—"Whither, and to what purpose?"—"Well, then, am I to marry her?"—"Poh! a man of my expectations marry a shopkeeper's daughter!" "What then am I to do with her?" "Hum—why—let me get into the chamber first, and then consider—" and so the self-examination ended.

Well, sir, "come what come might," I stole under cover of the darkness to the dwelling of my Dulcinea. All was quiet. At the concerted signal her window was gently opened. It was just above the projecting bow-window of her father's shop, which assisted me in mounting. The house was low, and I was enabled to scale the fortress with tolerable ease. I clambered with a beating heart; I reached the casement; I hoisted my body half into the chamber; and was welcomed, not by the embraces of my expecting fair one, but by the grasp of the crabbed-looking old father in the crisp-curled wig.

I extricated myself from his clutches, and endeavoured to make my retreat; but I was confounded by his cries of thieves! and robbers! I was bothered, too, by his Sunday cane, which was amazingly busy about my head as I descended, and against which my hat was but a poor protection. Never before had I an idea of the activity of an old man's arm, and the hardness of the knob of an ivory-headed cane. In my hurry and confusion I missed my footing, and

fell sprawling on the pavement. I was immediately surrounded by myrmidons, who, I doubt not, were on the watch for me. Indeed, I was in no situation to escape, for I had sprained my ankle in the fall, and could not stand. I was seized as a housebreaker; and to exonerate myself of a greater crime, I had to accuse myself of a less. I made known who I was, and why I came there. Alas! the varlets knew it already, and were only amusing themselves at my expense. My perfidious muse had been playing me one of her slippery tricks. The old curmudgeon of a father had found my sonnets and acrostics hid away in holes and corners of his shop: he had no taste for poetry like his daughter, and had instituted a rigorous though silent observation. He had moused upon our letters, detected our plans, and prepared every thing for my reception. Thus was I ever doomed to be led into scrapes by the muse. Let no man henceforth carry on a secret amour in poetry!

The old man's ire was in some measure appeased by the pommeling of my head and the

anguish of my sprain; so he did not put me to death on the spot. He was even humane enough to furnish a shutter, on which I was carried back to college like a wounded warrior. The porter was roused to admit me. The college gate was thrown open for my entry. The affair was blazed about the next morning, and became the joke of the college from the buttery to the hall.

I had leisure to repent during several weeks' confinement by my sprain, which I passed in translating Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy. I received a most tender and ill-spelled letter from my mistress, who had been sent to a relation in Coventry. She protested her innocence of my misfortunes, and vowed to be true to me "till deth." I took no notice of the letter, for I was cured, for the present, both of love and poetry. Women, however, are more constant in their attachments than men, whatever philosophers may say to the contrary. I am assured that she actually remained faithful to her vow for several months; but she had to deal with a cruel father, whose heart was as hard as the knob

of his cane. He was not to be touched by tears or poetry, but absolutely compelled her to marry a reputable young tradesman, who made her a happy woman in spite of herself, and of all the rules of romance; and what is more, the mother of several children. They are at this very day a thriving couple, and keep a snug corner shop, just opposite the figure of Peeping Tom, at Coventry.

I will not fatigue you by any more details of my studies at Oxford, though they were not always as severe as these; nor did I always pay as dear for my lessons. To be brief, then, I lived on in my usual miscellaneous manner, gradually getting knowledge of good and evil, until I had attained my twenty-first year. I had scarcely come of age when I heard of the sudden death of my father. The shock was severe, for though he had never treated me with much kindness, still he was my father, and at his death I felt alone in the world.

I returned home, and found myself the solitary master of the paternal mansion. A crowd of gloomy feelings came thronging upon me.

It was a place that always sobered me, and brought me to reflection; now especially, it looked so deserted and melancholy. I entered the little breakfasting room. There were my father's whip and spurs hanging by the fire-place; the Stud-book, Sporting Magazine, and Racing Calendar, his only reading. His favourite spaniel lay on the hearthrug. The poor animal, who had never before noticed me, now came fondling about me, licked my hand, then looked round the room, whined, wagged his tail slightly, and gazed wistfully in my face. I felt the full force of the appeal. "Poor Dash," said I, "we are both alone in the world, with nobody to care for us, and will take care of one another."—The dog never quitted me afterwards.

I could not go into my mother's room—my heart swelled when I passed within sight of the door. Her portrait hung in the parlour, just over the place where she used to sit. As I cast my eyes on it, I thought it looked at me with tenderness, and I burst into tears. I was a careless dog, it is true, hardened a little, perhaps,

by living in public schools, and buffeting about among strangers, who cared nothing for me; but the recollection of a mother's tenderness was overcoming.

I was not of an age or a temperament to be long depressed. There was a re-action in my system that always brought me up again after every pressure; and, indeed, my spirits were most buoyant after a temporary prostration. I settled the concerns of the estate as soon as possible; realised my property, which was not very considerable, but which appeared a vast deal to me, having a poetical eye that magnified every thing; and finding myself, at the end of a few months, free of all further business or restraint, I determined to go to London, and enjoy myself. Why should not I?—I was young, animated, joyous; had plenty of funds for present pleasures, and my uncle's estate in the perspective. Let those mope at college, and pore over books, thought I, who have their way to make in the world; it would be ridiculous drudgery in a youth of my expectations.

Away to London, therefore, I rattled in a tandem, determined to take the town gaily. I passed through several of the villages where I had played the Jack Pudding a few years before; and I visited the scenes of many of my adventures and follies, merely from that feeling of melancholy pleasure which we have in stepping again in the footprints of foregone existence, even when they have passed among weeds and briars. I made a circuit in the latter part of my journey, so as to take in West End and Hampstead, the scenes of my last dramatic exploit, and of the battle royal of the booth. As I drove along the ridge of Hampstead Hill, by Jack Straw's Castle, I paused at the spot where columbine and I had sat down so disconsolately in our ragged finery, and had looked dubiously on London. I almost expected to see her again, standing on the hill's brink, "like Niobe, all tears;"—mournful as Babylon in ruins!

"Poor columbine!" said I, with a heavy sigh, "thou wert a gallant, generous girl—a true

woman; faithful to the distressed, and ready to sacrifice thyself in the cause of worthless man!"

I tried to whistle off the recollection of her, for there was always something of self-reproach with it. I drove gaily along the road, enjoying the stare of hostlers and stable-boys as I managed my horses knowingly down the steep street of Hampstead; when, just at the skirts of the village, one of the traces of my leader came loose. I pulled up, and, as the animal was restive, and my servant a bungler, I called for assistance to the robustious master of a snug ale-house, who stood at his door with a tankard in his hand. He came readily to assist me, followed by his wife, with her bosom half open, a child in her arms, and two more at her heels. I stared for a moment as if doubting my eyes. I could not be mistaken: in the fat beer-blown landlord of the ale-house I recognised my old rival harlequin, and in his slattern spouse, the once trim and dimpling columbine.

The change of my looks from youth to manhood, and the change of my circumstances,

prevented them from recognising me. They could not suspect in the dashing young buck, fashionably dressed, and driving his own equipage, the painted beau with old peaked hat, and long, flimsy, sky-blue coat. My heart yearned with kindness towards columbine, and I was glad to see her establishment a thriving one. As soon as the harness was adjusted, I tossed a small purse of gold into her ample bosom; and then, pretending to give my horses a hearty cut of the whip, I made the lash curl with a whistling about the sleek sides of ancient harlequin. The horses dashed off like lightning, and I was whirled out of sight before either of the parties could get over their surprise at my liberal donations. I have always considered this as one of the greatest proofs of my poetical genius; it was distributing poetical justice in perfection.

I now entered London *en cavalier*, and became a blood upon town. I took fashionable lodgings in the west end; employed the first

tailor; frequented the regular lounges; gambled a little; lost my money good-humouredly, and gained a number of fashionable, good-for-nothing acquaintances. I gained some reputation, also, for a man of science, having become an expert boxer in the course of my studies at Oxford. I was distinguished, therefore, among the gentlemen of the fancy; became hand and glove with certain boxing noblemen, and was the admiration of the Fives Court. A gentleman's science, however, is apt to get him into sad scrapes: he is too prone to play the knight-errant, and to pick up quarrels which less scientific gentlemen would quietly avoid. I undertook one day to punish the insolence of a porter; he was a Hercules of a fellow, but then I was so secure in my science! I gained the victory of course. The porter pocketed his humiliation, bound up his broken head, and went about his business as unconcernedly as though nothing had happened; while I went to bed with my victory, and did not dare to show my battered face for a fort-

night, by which I discovered that a gentleman may have the worst of the battle even when victorious.

I am naturally a philosopher, and no one can moralize better after a misfortune has taken place: so I lay on my bed and moralized on this sorry ambition, which levels the gentleman with the clown. I know it is the opinion of many sages, who have thought deeply on these matters, that the noble science of boxing keeps up the bull-dog courage of the nation; and far be it from me to decry the advantage of becoming a nation of bull-dogs; but I now saw clearly that it was calculated to keep up the breed of English ruffians. "What is the Fives Court," said I to myself, as I turned uncomfortably in bed, "but a college of scoundrelism, where every bully-ruffian in the land may gain a fellowship? What is the slang language of 'The Fancy' but a jargon by which fools and knaves commune and understand each other, and enjoy a kind of superiority over the uninitiated? What is a boxing-match but an arena, where the noble and the

illustrious are jostled into familiarity with the infamous and the vulgar? What, in fact, is The Fancy itself, but a chain of easy communication, extending from the peer down to the pickpocket, through the medium of which, a man of rank may find, he has shaken hands, at three removes, with the murderer on the gibbet?—

"Enough!" ejaculated I, thoroughly convinced through the force of my philosophy, and the pain of my bruises—"I 'll have nothing more to do with The Fancy." So when I had recovered from my victory, I turned my attention to softer themes, and became a devoted admirer of the ladies. Had I had more industry and ambition in my nature, I might have worked my way to the very height of fashion, as I saw many laborious gentlemen doing around me. But it is a toilsome, an anxious, and an unhappy life: there are few beings so sleepless and miserable as your cultivators of fashionable smiles. I was quite content with that kind of society which forms the frontiers of fashion, and may be easily taken possession of. I found it a light,

easy, productive soil. I had but to go about and sow visiting cards, and I reaped a whole harvest of invitations. Indeed, my figure and address were by no means against me. It was whispered, too, among the young ladies, that I was prodigiously clever, and wrote poetry; and the old ladies had ascertained that I was a young gentleman of good family, handsome fortune, and "great expectations."

I now was carried away by the hurry of gay life, so intoxicating to a young man, and which a man of poetical temperament enjoys so highly on his first tasting of it: that rapid variety of sensations; that whirl of brilliant objects; that succession of pungent pleasures! I had no time for thought. I only felt. I never attempted to write poetry; my poetry seemed all to go off by transpiration. I lived poetry; it was all a poetical dream to me. A mere sensualist knows nothing of the delights of a splendid metropolis. He lives in a round of animal gratifications and heartless habits. But to a young man of poetical feelings, it is an ideal world, a scene of enchant-

ment and delusion; his imagination is in perpetual excitement, and gives a spiritual zest to every pleasure.

A season of town-life, however, somewhat sobered me of my intoxication; or, rather, I was rendered more serious by one of my old complaints—I fell in love. It was with a very pretty, though a very haughty fair one, who had come to London under the care of an old maiden aunt to enjoy the pleasures of a winter in town, and to get married. There was not a doubt of her commanding a choice of lovers; for she had long been the belle of a little cathedral city, and one of the poets of the place had absolutely celebrated her beauty in a copy of Latin verses. The most extravagant anticipations were formed by her friends of the sensation she would produce. It was feared by some that she might be precipitate in her choice, and take up with some inferior title. The aunt was determined nothing should gain her under a lord.

Alas! with all her charms, the young lady

lacked the one thing needful—she had no money. So she waited in vain for duke, marquis, or earl, to throw himself at her feet. As the season waned, so did the lady's expectations; when, just towards the close, I made my advances.

I was most favourably received by both the young lady and her aunt. It is true, I had no title; but then such great expectations! A marked preference was immediately shown me over two rivals, the younger son of a needy baronet, and a captain of dragoons on half-pay. I did not absolutely take the field in form, for I was determined not to be precipitate; but I drove my equipage frequently through the street in which she lived, and was always sure to see her at the window, generally with a book in her hand. I resumed my knack at rhyming, and sent her a long copy of verses; anonymously, to be sure; but she knew my handwriting. Both aunt and niece, however, displayed the most delightful ignorance on the subject. The young lady showed them to me; wondered who they could be written by; and declared there was

nothing in this world she loved so much as poetry: while the maiden aunt would put her pinching spectacles on her nose, and read them, with blunders in sense and sound, that were excruciating to an author's ears; protesting there was nothing equal to them in the whole Elegant Extracts.

The fashionable season closed without my adventuring to make a declaration, though I certainly had encouragement. I was not perfectly sure that I had effected a lodgment in the young lady's heart; and, to tell the truth, the aunt overdid her part, and was a little too extravagant in her liking of me. I knew that maiden aunts were not apt to be captivated by the mere personal merits of their nieces' admirers; and I wanted to ascertain how much of all this favour I owed to driving an equipage and having great expectations.

I had received many hints how charming their native place was during the summer months; what pleasant society they had; and what beautiful drives about the neighbourhood. They

had not, therefore, returned home long, before I made my appearance in dashing style, driving down the principal street. The very next morning I was seen at prayers, seated in the same pew with the reigning belle. Questions were whispered about the aisles, after service, "Who is he?" and "What is he?" And the replies were as usual, "A young gentleman of good family and fortune, and great expectations."

I was much struck with the peculiarities of this reverend little place. A cathedral, with its dependencies and regulations, presents a picture of other times, and of a different order of things. It is a rich relique of a more poetical age. There still linger about it the silence and solemnity of the cloister. In the present instance especially, where the cathedral was large, and the town was small, its influence was the more apparent. The solemn pomp of the service, performed twice a day, with the grand intonations of the organ, and the voices of the choir swelling through the magnificent pile, diffused, as it were, a perpetual sabbath over the place.

This routine of solemn ceremony continually going on, independent as it were of the world; this daily offering of melody and praise ascending like incense from the altar, had a powerful effect upon my imagination.

The aunt introduced me to her coterie, formed of families connected with the cathedral, and others of moderate fortune, but high respectability, who had nestled themselves under the wings of the cathedral to enjoy good society at moderate expense. It was a highly aristocratical little circle; scrupulous in its intercourse with others, and jealously cautious about admitting any thing common or unclean.

It seemed as if the courtesies of the old school had taken refuge here. There were continual interchanges of civilities, and of small presents of fruits and delicacies, and of complimentary crow-quill billets; for in a quiet, well-bred community like this, living entirely at ease, little duties, and little amusements, and little civilities, fill up the day. I have seen, in the midst of a warm day, a corpulent powdered

footman issuing from the iron gateway of a stately mansion, and traversing the little place with an air of mighty import, bearing a small tart on a large silver salver.

Their evening amusements were sober and primitive. They assembled at a moderate hour; the young ladies played music and the old ladies whist; and at an early hour they dispersed. There was no parade on these social occasions. Two or three old sedan chairs were in constant activity, though the greater part made their exit in clogs and pattens, with a footman or waiting-maid carrying a lantern in advance; and before midnight, the clank of pattens and gleam of lanterns about the quiet little place told that the evening party had dissolved.

Still I did not feel myself altogether so much at my ease as I had anticipated, considering the smallness of the place. I found it very different from other country places, and that it was not so easy to make a dash there. Sinner that I was! the very dignity and decorum of the little

community was rebuking to me. I feared my past idleness and folly would rise in judgment against me. I stood in awe of the dignitaries of the cathedral, whom I saw mingling familiarly in society. I became nervous on this point. The creak of a prebendary's shoes, sounding from one end of a quiet street to the other, was appalling to me; and the sight of a shovel hat was sufficient at any time to check me in the midst of my boldest poetical soarings.

And then the good aunt could not be quiet, but would cry me up for a genius, and extol my poetry to every one. So long as she confined this to the ladies it did well enough, because they were able to feel and appreciate poetry of the new romantic school. Nothing would content the good lady, however, but she must read my verses to a prebendary, who had long been the undoubted critic of the place. He was a thin, delicate old gentleman, of mild, polished manners, steeped to the lips in classic lore, and not easily put in a heat by any hot-blooded poetry of the day. He listened to my most

fervid thoughts and fervid words without a glow; shook his head with a smile, and condemned them as not being according to Horace, as not being legitimate poetry.

Several old ladies, who had heretofore been my admirers, shook their heads at hearing this; they could not think of praising any poetry that was not according to Horace; and as to any thing illegitimate, it was not to be countenanced in good society. Thanks to my stars, however, I had youth and novelty on my side: so the young ladies persisted in admiring my poetry, in despite of Horace and illegitimacy.

I consoled myself with the good opinion of the young ladies, whom I had always found to be the best judges of poetry. As to these old scholars, said I, they are apt to be chilled by being steeped in the cold fountains of the classics. Still I felt that I was losing ground, and that it was necessary to bring matters to a point. Just at this time there was a public ball, attended by the best society of the place, and by the gentry of the neighbourhood: I took great pains with

my toilet on the occasion, and I had never looked better. I had determined that night to make my grand assault on the heart of the young lady, to battle it with all my forces, and the next morning to demand a surrender in due form.

I entered the ball-room amidst a buzz and flutter, which generally took place among the young ladies on my appearance. I was in fine spirits; for to tell the truth, I had exhilarated myself by a cheerful glass of wine on the occasion. I talked, and rattled, and said a thousand silly things, slap-dash, with all the confidence of a man sure of his auditors,—and every thing had its effect.

In the midst of my triumph I observed a little knot gathering together in the upper part of the room: by degrees it increased. A tittering broke out there, and glances were cast round at me, and then there would be fresh tittering. Some of the young ladies would hurry away to distant parts of the room, and whisper to their friends. Wherever they went, there was still this tittering and glancing at me. I did not know

what to make of all this. I looked at myself from head to foot, and peeped at my back in a glass, to see if any thing was odd about my person; any awkward exposure, any whimsical tag hanging out:—no—every thing was right—I was a perfect picture. I determined that it must be some choice saying of mine that was bandied about in this knot of merry beauties, and I determined to enjoy one of my good things in the rebound. I stepped gently, therefore, up the room, smiling at every one as I passed, who, I must say, all smiled and tittered in return. I approached the group, smirking and perking my chin, like a man who is full of pleasant feeling, and sure of being well received. The cluster of little belles opened as I advanced.

Heavens and earth! whom should I perceive in the midst of them but my early and tormenting flame, the everlasting Sacharissa! She was grown, it is true, into the full beauty of womanhood; but showed, by the provoking merriment of her countenance, that she perfectly recollected

me, and the ridiculous flagellations of which she had twice been the cause.

I saw at once the exterminating cloud of ridicule that was bursting over me. My crest fell. The flame of love went suddenly out in my bosom, or was extinguished by overwhelming shame. How I got down the room I know not: I fancied every one tittering at me. Just as I reached the door, I caught a glance of my mistress and her aunt listening to the whispers of Sacharissa, the old lady raising her hands and eyes, and the face of the young one lighted up, as I imagined, with scorn ineffable. I paused to see no more, but made two steps from the top of the stairs to the bottom. The next morning, before sunrise, I beat a retreat, and did not feel the blushes cool from my tingling cheeks, until I had lost sight of the old towers of the cathedral.

I now returned to town thoughtful and crest-fallen. My money was nearly spent, for I had lived freely and without calculation. The dream

of love was over, and the reign of pleasure at an end. I determined to retrench while I had yet a trifle left; so selling my equipage and horses for half their value, I quietly put the money in my pocket, and turned pedestrian. I had not a doubt that, with my great expectations, I could at any time raise funds, either on usury or by borrowing; but I was principled against both one and the other, and resolved, by strict economy, to make my slender purse hold out until my uncle should give up the ghost, or rather the estate. I staid at home, therefore, and read, and would have written, but I had already suffered too much from my poetical productions, which had generally involved me in some ridiculous scrape. I gradually acquired a rusty look, and had a straitened, money-borrowing air, upon which the world began to shy me. I have never felt disposed to quarrel with the world for its conduct; it has always used me well. When I have been flush and gay, and disposed for society, it has caressed me; and when I have been pinched and reduced, and wished to be

alone, why, it has left me alone; and what more could a man desire? Take my word for it, this world is a more obliging world than people generally represent it.

Well, sir, in the midst of my retrenchment, my retirement, and my studiousness, I received news that my uncle was dangerously ill. I hastened, on the wings of an heir's affections, to receive his dying breath and his last testament. I found him attended by his faithful valet, old Iron John; by the woman who occasionally worked about the house, and by the foxy-headed boy, young Orson, whom I had occasionally hunted about the park. Iron John gasped a kind of asthmatical salutation as I entered the room, and received me with something almost like a smile of welcome. The woman sat blubbering at the foot of the bed; and the foxy-headed Orson, who had now grown up to be a lubberly lout, stood gazing in stupid vacancy at a distance.

My uncle lay stretched upon his back.—The chamber was without fire, or any of the comforts of a sick room. The cobwebs flaunted from the

ceiling. The tester was covered with dust, and the curtains were tattered. From underneath the bed peeped out one end of his strong box. Against the wainscot were suspended rusty blunderbusses, horse pistols, and a cut and thrust sword, with which he had fortified his room to defend his life and treasure. He had employed no physician during his illness; and from the scanty relics lying on the table, seemed almost to have denied to himself the assistance of a cook.

When I entered the room, he was lying motionless; his eyes fixed and his mouth open: at the first look I thought him a corpse. The noise of my entrance made him turn his head. At the sight of me, a ghastly smile came over his face, and his glazing eye gleamed with satisfaction. It was the only smile he had ever given me, and it went to my heart. "Poor old man!" thought I, "why would you force me to leave you thus desolate, when I see that my presence has the power to cheer you?"

"Nephew," said he, after several efforts, and

in a low gasping voice—"I am glad you are come. I shall now die with satisfaction. Look," said he, raising his withered hand, and pointing—"Look in that box on the table; you will find that I have not forgotten you."

I pressed his hand to my heart, and the tears stood in my eyes. I sat down by his bed-side, and watched him, but he never spoke again. My presence, however, gave him evident satisfaction; for every now and then, as he looked at me, a vague smile would come over his visage, and he would feebly point to the sealed box on the table. As the day wore away, his life appeared to wear away with it. Towards sunset his hand sunk on the bed and lay motionless, his eyes grew glazed, his mouth remained open, and thus he gradually died.

I could not but feel shocked at this absolute extinction of my kindred. I dropped a tear of real sorrow over this strange old man, who had thus reserved his smile of kindness to his death-bed; like an evening sun after a gloomy day,

just shining out to set in darkness. Leaving the corpse in charge of the domestics, I retired for the night.

It was a rough night. The winds seemed as if singing my uncle's requiem about the mansion, and the blood-hounds howled without as if they knew of the death of their old master. Iron John almost grudged me the tallow candle to burn in my apartment, and light up its dreariness, so accustomed had he been to starveling economy. I could not sleep. The recollection of my uncle's dying scene, and the dreary sounds about the house, affected my mind. These, however, were succeeded by plans for the future, and I lay awake the greater part of the night, indulging the poetical anticipation how soon I should make these old walls ring with cheerful life, and restore the hospitality of my mother's ancestors.

My uncle's funeral was decent, but private. I knew there was nobody that respected his memory, and I was determined that none should

be summoned to sneer over his funeral, and make merry at his grave. He was buried in the church of the neighbouring village, though it was not the burying-place of his race ; but he had expressly enjoined that he should not be buried with his family: he had quarrelled with most of them when living, and he carried his resentments even into the grave.

I defrayed the expenses of his funeral out of my own purse, that I might have done with the undertakers at once, and clear the ill-omened birds from the premises. I invited the parson of the parish, and the lawyer from the village, to attend at the house the next morning, and hear the reading of the will. I treated them to an excellent breakfast, a profusion that had not been seen at the house for many a year. As soon as the breakfast things were removed, I summoned Iron John, the woman, and the boy, for I was particular in having every one present and proceeding regularly. The box was placed on the table—all was silence—I broke the seal—raised

the lid, and beheld—not the will—but my accursed poem of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair!

Could any mortal have conceived that this old withered man, so taciturn and apparently so lost to feeling, could have treasured up for years the thoughtless pleasantry of a boy, to punish him with such cruel ingenuity? I now could account for his dying smile, the only one he had ever given me. He had been a grave man all his life; it was strange that he should die in the enjoyment of a joke, and it was hard that that joke should be at my expense.

The lawyer and the parson seemed at a loss to comprehend the matter. "Here must be some mistake," said the lawyer; "there is no will here."

"Oh!" said Iron John, creaking forth his rusty jaws, "if it is a will you are looking for, I believe I can find one."

He retired with the same singular smile with which he had greeted me on my arrival, and which I now apprehended boded me no good.

In a little while he returned with a will perfect at all points, properly signed and sealed, and witnessed and worded with horrible correctness; in which he left large legacies to Iron John and his daughter, and the residue of his fortune to the foxy-headed boy; who, to my utter astonishment, was his son by this very woman; he having married her privately, and, as I verily believe, for no other purpose than to have an heir, and so balk my father and his issue of the inheritance. There was one little proviso, in which he mentioned, that, having discovered his nephew to have a pretty turn for poetry, he presumed he had no occasion for wealth; he recommended him, however, to the patronage of his heir, and requested that he might have a garret, rent-free, in Doubting Castle.

END OF VOL. I.

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